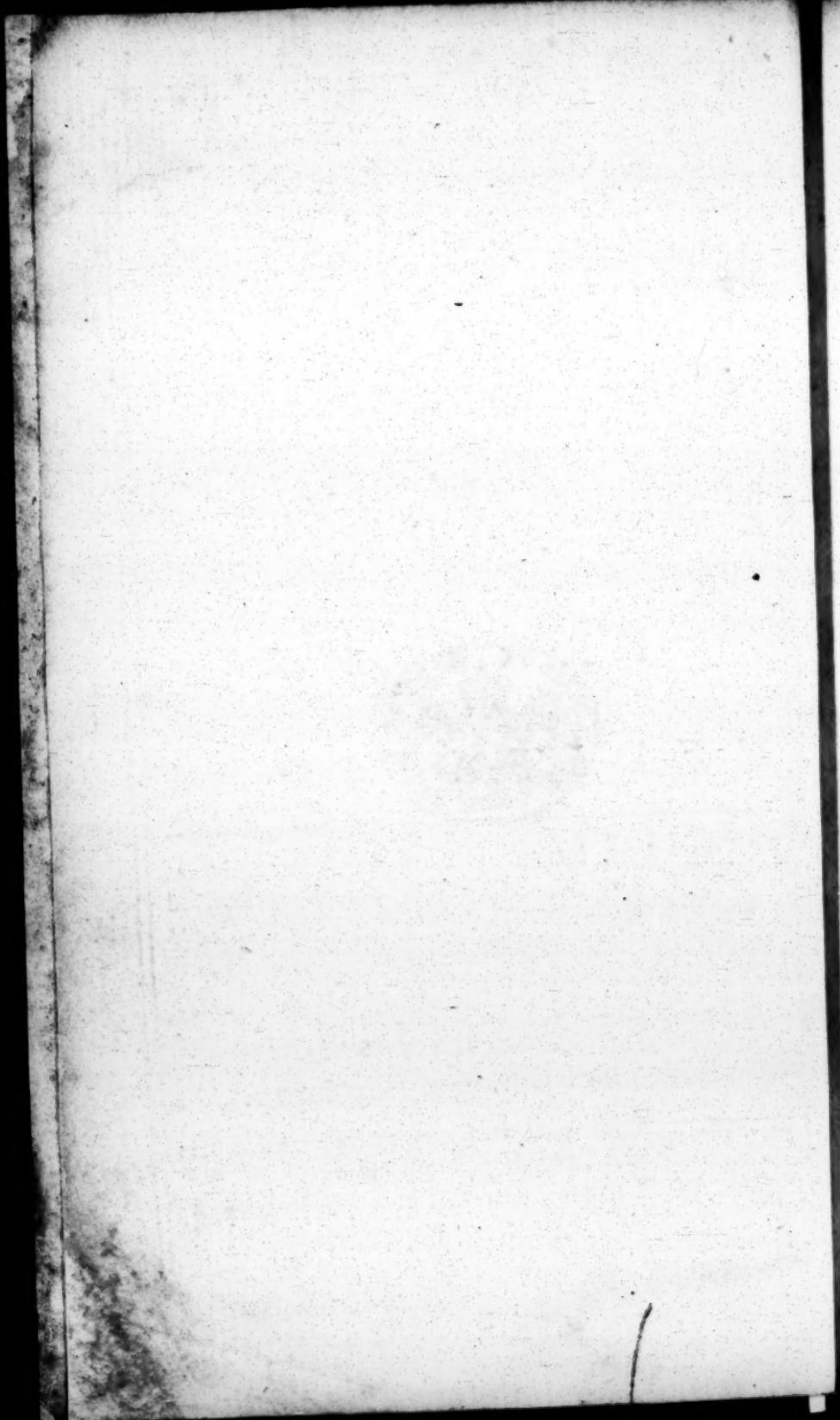


THE
SACRAMENT
OF THE
LORD's SUPPER
EXPLAINED;
OR THE
Things to be KNOWN and DONE,
To make a
WORTHY COMMUNICANT
With suitable
PRAYERS
AND
MEDITATIONS.

First drawn up for the Use of the Inhabitants of
the Parish of L A M B E T H and since Revised
and Enlarged.

B Y
The Right Reverend Father in G O D, 
EDMUND GIBSON, D. D.
Late Lord Bishop of LONDON.

L O N D O N:
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in Ludgate-Street. 1760.





TO THE
INHABITANTS
Of the PARISH of
L A M B E T H.

MY BRETHREN,



HE two Things which, above all others, help to preserve in Christians a Spirit of Religion and a Reverence of Almighty God, are Daily Prayer, and the Frequent Receiving of the Holy Sacrament. No Person who duly attends these two Offices, can be unacquainted with God and his Soul; and I may add, that whoever lives in the Neglect of them, lives in an habitual

tual Forgetfulness of God and his Duty ; or at best, is Lukewarm and Indifferent in the Concerns of Religion.

It is not many Months, since I put into your Hands an Exhortation to Family Prayer, with two Forms of Morning and Evening Prayer, for Families ; fitted also for the Use of one Person in private. And the good Effects which I find that has had among you, encourages me to add this Exhortation to the Frequent Receiving of the Lord's Supper, together with a plain Account of the Nature and Benefits of that holy Institution, and such Helps and Directions, as may conduce to make you worthy Partakers of it.

There are many Books already written upon this Subject ; and it is not my Meaning, to persuade you to lay aside such as you have been accustomed to, if they be suited to your Condition and Circumstances. My only Design is, to provide proper Instructions and Assurances

of the Parish of LAMBETH. 5
tances for those who have none ; that those who are religiously disposed, may see the Obligations they are under to come to the Lord's Table, and the Manner in which they are to prepare themselves for it ; and that others, who have really no Inclination to come, may not be able to plead the Want of proper Assistance, as a Reason and Excuse for their keeping away.

I have endeavoured to make it plain and short, and comprehensive, in order to make it of more general Use ; which seems not to have been regarded enough, in the greatest Parts of the Books that have been written upon this Subject. For some taking it for granted, that the Nature and Design of this Institution are sufficiently understood by most Christians, have judged it unnecessary to spend Time in explaining it : And others have begun at the Preparations for receiving it ; forgetting the Slowness of Christians in coming to the Lord's

Table, and the Scruples, Pretences, and Excuses, by which they endeavour to justify that Neglect. Others again, having set forth the Necessity of Examining our Lives in order to it, do omit, for Brevity's Sake, the particular Heads of Duty to be examined upon, tho' that, in Truth, seems to be the most necessary Part of our Preparation, and not to be performed aright (especially by Persons engaged in the Cares of the World) without some Assurances of that Kind.

On the other Hand, several of the Books upon this Subject are very large, and framed only for the Use of Persons who are at Liberty to be long and often in their Closets. Such are, the Weekly Preparations Before, and the Weekly Exercises After the Holy Sacrament: which are very useful to devout Christians who have much Leisure; but they have accidentally an ill Effect upon those who have little, as they lead them to think, that unless they can go through the

the Courses directed in such Books, their Preparations will be at best imperfect; and their Condition not allowing them Time for that, they wholly lay aside the Thoughts of Receiving it at all.

I speak not this with the least Intention to lessen the Credit and Value of such Books, which have done great Service to Religion in their several Ways. But when I set myself to draw up proper Instructions and Assurances for my Parish in general, I foresaw they wou'd be very imperfect, except I took it for granted, that some Persons were wholly Strangers to the Nature, Meaning and Design of this Institution; and that many more, notwithstanding their Knowledge of these Things, were shamefully slow and negligent in this Part of their Duty; being either kept from the Lord's Table by some groundless Fears and Scruples, or satisfying their Consciences with Excuses and Pretences altogether at groundless.

Upon these Accounts, it was necessary to begin with the Institution of the Holy Sacrament; and that being clearly and particularly explained, to proceed to the Obligations upon Christians to come frequently to it; and then, to remove out of the Way, whatever Scruples or Excuses may either hinder Men from complying with these Obligations, or be made a Cloak to bide the Shame and Scandal of neglecting them. These are the Heads treated of in the First Part; and as many as do not want to be instructed in them, will consider that others do, who are equally under my Care; and blessing God for their own Knowledge and religious Dispositions, will heartily wish and pray, that their Brethren, as well as themselves, may be delivered from Ignorance, Error, and Lukewarmness.

Having endeavoured in the First Part to give all who are of Age to be instructed, a sufficient Knowledge of the Institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,

Supper, with their Obligations to Receive it ; my Business in the Second Part, is to assist them in their Preparation, by laying down a plain Method of proceeding in it ; together with the Rules of Examination, and such Prayers and Meditations as I conceive to be proper under each Head, Before, At, and After their Receiving. All which I have contrived in the shortest Manner that I could, to make it suitable to the Circumstances of such Persons as are obliged to a daily Attendance upon their respective Callings, which happens to be the Condition of the greatest Part of those, whom the Providence of God hath committed to my Care. As to others, who have more Time and Leisure, and who may think this Method of Preparation too short ; it is in no Part of my Intention to confine them to it, and they may easily furnish themselves with others that are much larger.

But whatever your Condition be, I must beseech all in general, who have hi-

10 To the Inhabitants, &c.

thereto lived in the Neglect of this holy Ordinance, to lay to Heart their manifold Obligations to partake of it; and if, at first, the Preparation shall seem tedious and difficult, they must remember, that nothing has made it so but their own Neglect; and let them be assured, that when they have in earnest begun the Work, they will find it every Time more easy and delightful.

For my own Part, I shall think my Labour happily bestowed, if This, by the Blessing of God, shall prove the Means of adding to the Number of our Communicants; which is the surest Testimony of the Increase of Piety and Religion, and will be an exceeding great Comfort to

Your very affectionate

May 10,
1705.

Brother and Pastor,

EDMUND GIBSON.



INTRODUCTION.

Of the Sacrament of the LORD's SUPPER in General.

HE Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is an Ordinance of the Gospel appointed by Jesus Christ to preserve in Christians a perpetual Remembrance of his Death, and to make them Partakers of the Benefits of it.

Concerning this Institution, it is requisite that every Christian be well instructed upon the *Six* following Heads: Which, consisting, 1. Of Things to be KNOWN; and, 2. Of Things to be DONE; the Explanation of them will

will be more clear and distinct, if we accordingly divide them into these two Parts.

P A R T I.

- I. What is the *Nature* and *Design* of the Institution of the Lord's Supper?
- II. What are the *Obligations* which Christians lie under to *Receive* it?
- III. How groundless the *Pretences* are, upon which so many excuse themselves from coming to it!

P A R T II.

- IV. What *Preparations* are requisite, to make us *fit* and *worthy* Partakers of the Lord's Supper?
- V. How we are to behave ourselves *In* the Receiving of it?
- VI. What is to be done by Us After We have Received it?

P A R T



P A R T. I.

S E C T. I.

*Of the Institution of the Sacrament of
the Lord's Supper.*



THE Sacrament of the Lord's Supper being an Institution of our Saviour CHRIST, the true Knowledge thereof must be sought for in the Holy Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, which contains the History of our Saviour's Sufferings, and of the Covenant that God made with Mankind in his Blood.

The Institution of this Sacrament; best explained by the Institution of the Passover.

BUT inasmuch as this Ordinance of the Christian Religion, was not only instituted at the Time of holding the *Jewish Passover*, but was in some Measure taken from it, and doth in many Respects bear a Relation to it; therefore in order to a clearer Understanding of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it will be necessary to premise somewhat concerning the Institution of the *Jewish Passover*. For this Reason, I will first, by Way of Introduction, give a brief Account of the Occasion, Manner, and Design of Instituting the *Jewish Passover*; and then I will apply that Account to the Institution of the *Lord's Supper*, and by that Means lead the Reader to a full and distinct Knowledge of this Institution.

As to the Occasion of Instituting the *Jewish Passover*; we read in the xiith Chapter of the Book of *Exodus*, that when God was about to deliver the Children of *Israel* out of their Bondage in *Egypt*, and to the End *Pharaoh* might let them go, had determined to slay all the First-born of the *Egyptians*; he commanded, by the Hand of *Moses*, that in the Evening of

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that Night in which he meant to do this, every House of the Children of *Israel* should slay a Lamb without Blemish, and take of the Blood, and strike it on the Posts of their Houses, that it might be a Token to the destroying Angel not to slay the First-born in any of the Houses where the Blood was seen. Which slaying of the Lamb, if it was for the Redemption of their First-born, as it seems to have been, was very agreeable to the End and Design of expiatory Sacrifices from the Beginning; wherein GOD was pleased to accept the Blood of Beasts for the Lives of Men, and which he had done most remarkably in accepting a Ram for the Life of *Isaac*, when *Abraham* was about to offer him in Obedience to his Command.

WHEN the Lamb was slain, and the Blood stricken on the Posts of the Houses, it was eaten by the *Family* (as Peace-offerings, and Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving were afterwards ordered to be,) and what remained was burnt with Fire, and none of it kept until the Morning; which also was afterwards ordained by

GOD.

God as a Rule in all Peace-Offerings for Thanksgiving. (*Levit. vii. 15.*) *And the Flesh of the Sacrifice of his Peace-Offerings for Thanksgiving, shall be eaten the same Day that it is offered; he shall not leave any Thing of it until the Morning.* And withal it was eaten with unleavened Bread (which is heavy and unsavoury) and with bitter Herbs; both of them in Token of the hard Bondage which they had endured in Egypt.

At the same Time that God enjoyned all this to be performed in the Night on which they were to be delivered; he commanded that the same should be observed and repeated by them, for a perpetual Ordinance, as long as they continued a People (*Exod. xii. 24.*) *Ye shall observe this Thing for an Ordinance to thee, and to thy Sons for ever.* And the End of making it a perpetual Ordinance, is expressed at the 26th and 27th Verses: *And it shall come to pass when your Children shall say unto you, What mean you by this Service? That ye shall say, It is the Sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the Houses of the Children of Israel,*

Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our Houses.

IN Compliance with these Commands, their Method of holding the Passover (as the Jewish Writers relate it) was thus: After the Master of the House had taken the bitter Herbs, and eat of them himself, and distributed to the rest, he related the History of the Miseries of their Forefathers in *Egypt*; which being ended, he took unleavened Cakes, and having blessed them, eat, and distributed them, saying, *This is the Bread of Affliction which our Forefathers did eat in Egypt.* Then he also distributed the Lamb, which was followed by a Cup of Wine, first blessed, and then distributed; in like Manner as their other Festival Entertainments were usually ended. And the whole Service was concluded with an Hymn of Praise and Thanksgiving, namely the cxiiith and the cxivth *Psalms.*

IN this short Account of the *Jewish* Passover, we see a solemn Ordinance instituted by GOD, in Commemoration of the greatest Deliverance that he ever vouch-

vouchsafed to that People ; with a Command to them and their Posterity to continue the Observance of it, as long as they should continue a Nation. And we see the Blood of the Lamb, as a Sign and Token of God's having taken them into his Protection ; that they being thus eminently delivered, and preserving the Memory of that Deliverance to all Generations, might ever continue to be *bis Peo- ple*, as he had shewn himself to be *their God*. Likewise, we see God establishing the Token of a peculiar Covenant with the Seed of *Jacob*, (from whom the Mes-siah, the great Blessing promised to *Abra- ham*, was to come) over and above the Covenant of Circumcision, which was common to the whole Seed of *Abraham*. For it was this Deliverance, and the Memorial of it, which shewed them that *they* were the People mentioned by God, when he made the Covenant with *Abraham*, whose Seed were to be afflicted in a strange Land ; and after that to be delivered, and put in Possession of the Land of *Canaan*. And this Deliverance was as it were the Beginning

ning of that Covenant, into which God entered with them in a more solemn Manner at Mount *Sinai*; where, after the Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings (*Ex. xxiv. 5.*) *Moses*, the Mediator of that Covenant between God and the People, took the Book of the Covenant, which began with a Memorial of this great Deliverance. *I am the Lord thy Lord, which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and of the House of Bondage*, and contained in it all that was required on God's Part. Having read it in the Audience of the People, and received a solemn Declaration and Promise of Obedience on their Part. (*All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be Obedient*) he then took the Blood, and sprinkled it on the People, and said, *Behold the Blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these Words.* And if we look back to the elder Times before *Moses*, we shall find it a very early Practice, not only to worship God by Sacrifices, but also to make and ratify Covenants by Blood.

The foregoing Account of the Passover, applied to the Institution of the Lord's Supper.

IN the foregoing Account of the Institution of the Passover, and of the Covenant which God entered into with the *Israelites*, we see plainly that all this was a Type and Figure of our Saviour **CHRIST**, and of the far greater Deliverance from the Slavery of Sin and Satan, which he wrought for Mankind by his own Blood; taking their Guilt upon himself, and receiving them into his Protection, and affording them constant Supplies of Spiritual Strength, and at last conducting them to their heavenly Rest; of all which, the Passover, and the Receiving *Manna* from Heaven, and Water out of the Rock, and God's conducting them to *Canaan* their earthly Rest, were only Types and Figures, and are so declared to be in the New Testament: Particularly, in Allusion to the Passover, **CHRIST** is called (*John i. 29.*) *The Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World.* And we are said, (*1 Pet. i. 19.*) *to be redeemed with the precious Blood of CHRIST, as a Lamb without Blemish.*

miss and without Spot. And CHRIST is stiled (Rev. v. 19.) the Lamb that was slain, and that redeemed us to God by his Blood. Which Redemption was not only wrought for us by CHRIST, at the *Time of the Jewish Passover*, but the Memorial of it, which he then instituted, was the very Bread and Wine which were ordinarily used and blessed in the Celebration of the Passover: Only, they were consecrated by him to be Memorials of a far greater Deliverance and Blessing; the Bread, and the Distribution of it, to represent his Body broken; and the Wine, as distinct from it, to represent his Blood shed, for the Deliverance of Mankind from the Dominion of Satan. As for the *Lamb*, he himself was now to be slain in the Stead of it; and as for the Hymn which our Saviour and his Disciples sung on that Occasion, it was probably the very same Hymn of Blessing and Thanksgiving, that the *Jews* usually sung after their Passover. In Allusion whereunto, and to the Cup of Blessing, which among the *Jews* did immediately precede the Con-

Matt. xxvi. 26.
Mark xiv. 23.
Luke xxiii. 12.
1 Cor. xi. 23.

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cluding Hymn, St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 16.) calls the *Cup* in the Communion, the *Cup of Blessing*; and *Blessing*, in the Language of the Holy Scripture, being the same with *Praising and giving of Thanks*, the whole Office of the Communion was called by the ancient Christians the *Eucharist*, a being a solemn Service of Praise and *Thanksgiving* for the greatest Mercy that GOD ever vouchsafed to Mankind. And further as the *Passover* was to remain among the *Jews* a *standing Memorial* of their Deliverance, as long as they continued a Nation; so CHRIST (being about to fulfil and abolish that Type by the Offering of himself, and thereby to work for Mankind a *Spiritual Redemption* from the Slavery of Sin and Satan) did establish a *standing Memorial* of this Deliverance, to be celebrated among Christians to the End of the World, or 'till his second Coming: *This do*, says our Saviour, *in Remembrance of me*; and St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 26.) *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death 'till he come*; commemorating his Love to Mankind

kind in laying down his Life, together with the great Deliverance wrought for them, and the great Blessings and Benefits which his Death insured to them. And this, no doubt, with the same further Design that was in the *Jewish Passover*; namely, that by the Remembrance of those Blessings and Benefits (revived upon their Minds by the Celebration of this Ordinance, and represented to their View by the visible Signs of Bread and Wine) and by putting Christians, to the End of the World, as much as might be, into the Circumstances of those who *beheld* our Saviour hanging on the Cross; there might be excited in them a great Thankfulness, and a suitable Sense of Duty, and (as a Consequence of these) repeated Resolutions and Vows of Obedience.

For as the Passover of the Jews was not only for a perpetual Memory of their Deliverance, but also for a perpetual Declaration of Goodness on God's Part, and of Duty and Obedience on theirs, and was therefore in the Nature of

The holy Sacrament
a Covenant, as the
Passover was.

of a Covenant between them ; so though the first Design of the *Lord's Supper* was what our Saviour himself expresses, namely, for *a perpetual Remembrance of his Death*, yet was it also intended to be the Memorial of the *Covenant* which was established in his Blood between GOD and MAN. And accordingly, in the Institution of this Sacrament, our Saviour declared the Cup to be the New Testament, or *Covenant*, in his Blood : that is, the Representation of the Shedding of his Blood, which Blood was to be the Foundation of a new Covenant between GOD and MAN, for the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Bestowing all Spiritual Blessings and Benefits, in order to eternal Happiness after this Life, on Condition of *Faith* in CHRIST, and a sincere Obedience. On GOD's Part, it is a perpetual Pledge and Assurance to Men of all that he has promised them through CHRIST ; and on MAN's Part, it is a solemn Profession of Obedience, and a Pleading the Merits of CHRIST in the Presence of GOD, and a Representation made before him of the Passion of his Son, to the End that he

may

may be favourable and propitious to us, according to the Tenour of that Covenant.

FOR this, like all other Sacraments, is not only a Sign, but an *assuring* Sign, as a pious and learned * Writer expresses it; and the Sacramental Bread and Wine, (like the *Manna*, and the *Rock* in the Wilderness) are not only Emblems of CHRIST, but Pledges which

The Holy
Sacrament, a
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assure all faithful Receivers * Mr. Mede. of their enjoying Him, with all his Benefits. And he afterwards expresses this yet more distinctly; observing, That in a Sacrament, we must not only consider the visible Sign, but chiefly the invisible Thing thereby signified and confirmed, which invisible Thing (says he) is always double. First, The Root or Fountain: Secondly, The gracious Blessings and Benefits which flow from it. The Root and Fountain is He, through whom, and by whom we receive all the Blessings and Benefits we enjoy from God our Father, and without whom he vouchsafes us nothing. And therefore as God

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confers no Manner of Blessing upon us, but through Christ ; so the Manner and Nature of a Sacrament is to assure and confirm to us whatsoever it offers us, only through him.

Now, the Benefits which C H R I S T obtained for us by his Death, are the Pardon of our Sins, and spiritual Strength ; and, which is the certain Consequence of these, Peace with God. And C H R I S T has appointed Bread and Wine to be the Memorial of his Death ; Bread, as strengthening the Body ; and Wine, as comforting and refreshing the Heart ; to signify that spiritual Strength and Comfort, and Refreshment, which are conveyed to our Souls by the Grace of GOD ; and by the Sense and Assurance of our Reconciliation to him. And as oft as we celebrate this holy Memorial, in Obedience to the Command of C H R I S T ; we, on our Part, do not only profess our Belief in him, and our Reliance upon his Merits, but we *set forth* and *plead* before G o d the Atonement made for us by his own Son, and with an humble Assurance *lay Claim* to the Benefits

Benefits of it ; all which G o d consigns and seals to us in these holy Mysteries, upon our Faith and Repentance. This is what St. *Paul* seems to mean (*Cor. x. 16.*) when he calls the Christian's Cup of Blessing, the *Communion* or *Communication* of the Blood of C H R I S T ; and the Bread which we break, the *Communion* or *Communication* of the Body of C H R I S T ; that is, a Conveyance of all the Benefits of his Death and Passion, to every faithful and worthy Receiver.

A N D the Comparison that our Saviour makes between the *Manna* of the *Jews*, which supported them on their Journey to their Earthly *Canaan*, and his Flesh and Blood, which was to be the spiritual Food of Christians in their Pilgrimage towards their Heavenly Rest, shews the spiritual Efficacy of eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood, or participating of these *Memorials* of them by a lively Faith : (*John vi. 49.*) *Your Fathers did eat Manna in the Wilderness, and are dead* ; but (*ver. 54, 56.*) *who so eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life*, — and dwel-

leth in me, and I in him. And what he adds, (ver. 62.) *The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life;* shews plainly, that He spake of *spiritual* Gifts and Graces, which breed and nourish in us a *spiritual* Life, and maintain a *spiritual Union* between **C H R I S T** and us; and which are conveyed and sealed to us by our partaking of his holy Ordinance, that he hath appointed, with true Faith, and a penitent Heart. The Substance of all which is briefly but fully expressed in our Church Catechism, where he tells us the Meaning of a *Sacrament* in general; namely, *An outward and visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a Means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof.*

ACCORDINGLY, the *Sacrament of Baptism*, is not only a Rite or Ceremony, by which we are admitted into the Christian Church, or the Society of Christian People; but it is also, as St. Paul calls it, *the Laver of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, (Tit. iii. 5.) agreeably

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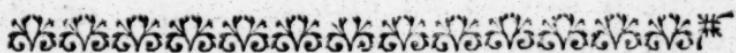
to our Saviour's own Expression (*John* iii. v.) of being *born again of Water and of the Spirit*; all which accompanying this Initiation into the Society of Christians, are plainly Descriptions of a *new Birth*, and a *new Life*, produced and wrought in us by the Spirit of **G**o**d**. Of which spiritual Life, the Body and Blood of **C**h**r***i***s****t** (received by the Faithful, according to his own Ordinance, with a penitent Heart and lively Faith) are the proper *Nourishment*; as the Graces therein conveyed to us, are the *Showers* which water and keep alive those Seeds of the Spirit that are sown in our Hearts by Baptism, and make them spring and grow up to everlasting Life. And as the Covenant into which we enter with **G**o**d** in our Baptism, is a Covenant of *Grace*, which not only leaves Room for Mercy and Favour upon our Repentance for past Sins, but also promises new Supplies of Strength, to enable us to resist and subdue them for the Time to come; so is our receiving the Sacrament of **C**h**r***i***s****t**'s Body and Blood, a solemn *Renewing* of that Covenant. On our Part,

it is a Pleading before G o d the Merits and Efficacy of C H R I S T ' s Death, for the Pardon of our past Sins, and for Grace to avoid them for the Time to come ; and on God's Part, it is a *Conveying* and *Sealing* those Benefits to every penitent and faithful Receiver.

AND on Account of the great Benefit and Importance of this Institution, and the due Use of it, in the whole Course of the Christian Life, it has been long called among Christians, by way of Eminence, the *Holy Sacrament* ; as being, of all others, the most *Holy* and significant Ordinance and Mystery of our Religion, and being also (according to the Use of the Word in *Latin* Writers for an *Oath*, and particularly for the Oath of *Fidelity* which Soldiers took to their Commanders) a solemn Engagement, by which Christians declare their unfeigned Resolutions of Obedience, and that notwithstanding their former Disobedience, they will, for the Time to come, be the faithful Servants and Soldiers of J E S U S C H R I S T . Agreeably to the Account which *Pliny* writes to *Trajan* the

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Emperor, of the Manner of the Christian Worship, *That having sung a Hymn to CHRIST as GOD, they did Sacramento se obstringere, bind themselves by an Oath, not to Rob, Steal, commit Adultery, &c.* (Book 10. Ep. 97.) which is a plain Description of the Celebration of the Lord's Supper.



S E C T. II.

The Obligations upon Christians to partake frequently of the Sacrament of CHRIST's Body and Blood.

IN this Account of the Institution, Nature, and Efficacy of the Sacrament of CHRIST's Body and Blood; every serious Christian will find sufficient Arguments, not only to persuade and dispose him to be a Partaker of it, but to desire it zealously, and to come to it frequently,

The Comfort of frequent Communion.

quently, as an Institution and Exercise that is full of spiritual Comforts, Blessings, and Benefits. Consider it barely as a *Memorial* of C H R I S T's dying for us ; and what can be more comfortable, than to remember our Deliverance from the Dominion of Satan, the Slavery of Sin, and Eternal Misery ? Consider it not only as a Sign, but as an *assuring* Sign, or, in other Words, not only as a Remembrance of our Redemption from Sin, and Reconciliation to God, but as a Seal and Pledge of his Pardon and Favour ; and how sweet and refreshing must this be to a pious Soul, which finds no Peace or Comfort but in an Assurance of GOD's Pardon and Favour. Consider it as a *Renewal* of our Covenant with God, and a solemn Pleading of the Merits of C H R I S T before him ; and who, that is conscious of his manifold Breaches of that *Covenant*, and sensible how great Need he has to lay hold on the Merits of C H R I S T, can be indifferent whether he join with his Fellow Christians in this divine Office ? Finally, consider the happy *Effects* of a due and religious

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Sect. II. receive the *Holy Sacrament* 33
gious Use of this holy Ordinance, as it gives fresh Nourishment to the Soul, and is the Means of conveying into our Hearts new Supplies of spiritual Strength ; and surely, none who do in Earnest labour against Sin, and at the same Time feel their own Weakness and Corruption, can need much Persuasion to use the *proper Means* of obtaining Strength from *God*, to *support* and *quicken* them in their spiritual Welfare.

THESE, and the like Considerations of spiritual Comfort and Benefit, must of Course make it the Desire and Delight of serious Christians, to partake of this holy Ordinance. And that others who are not so strongly affected and influenced by those Motives of spiritual Comfort and Benefit, may not think themselves at Liberty to partake or not partake of it, as they please ; they are to remember that it is an express *Command* of our Saviour **C H R I S T**, and, which is more, his *Dying Command*, that every Christian do join in this solemn Memorial of his

Frequent
Communion
enjoined and
supposed in
Scripture.

Death and Passion. For so we read in the Gospel (*Luke xxii. 9.*) that immediately after he had administered it to his Disciples, he added, *This do in in Remembrance of me*; and in St. Paul, who declares (*1 Cor. xi. 23.*) that he delivers nothing but what he hath received from CHRIST, we read, that our Saviour did not only add those Words after the Administration of the Bread, but did yet more expressly add, after the Administration of the Cup, *This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in Remembrance of me*; *For, as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come*; that is, 'till his second Coming to judge the World. By which Precept, the Communion of CHRIST's Body and Blood, as represented by Bread and Wine in this Holy Sacrament, is made the standing Memorial of his Death and Sufferings, in all Christian Assemblies, to the End of the World.

AND so, it is plain, the Disciples and — and practised in the first Christians understood it, first Ages of and in their Practice made it, Christianity. not only a Part of Religious Worship,

Worship, but a constant Part of the Service of the Lord's Day ? as we gather from that general Account (*Act*s ii. 42.) of their *continuing steadfastly in breaking of Bread and in Prayers*; and a more particular Declaration of it, (*Act*s xx. 7. *Upon the First Day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread*: with the Testimony of *Justyn Martyr* (an ancient Father, who lived near the Age of the Apostles) concerning the Practice of the Christians in his Time, “That their Custom was, to meet together on the Lord's Day, and after certain Portions of Scripture read and expounded to them, to join in Prayer, and in the *Sacrament*,”) Like to which is the fore-mentioned Account that *Pliny*, who was Governor of *Bitynia*, gave of the Christians in that Province; “That upon a set solemn Day (which was very probably the *Lord's Day*) they were wont to meet together, and oblige themselves by a *Sacrament*, or solemn Oath, not to commit any Wickedness,” &c. Not that our Saviour or his Apostles had made it an

express

The Obligations to Part I.
express Command to celebrate the Holy
 Communion every Lord's Day ; but such
 was the fervent Zeal of those early Times
 for their Dying Lord, and so great a Re-
 proach is it to the general Neglect and
 Lukewarmness of our Age.

The many
 Advantages
 which accrue
 to Christians
 from frequent
 Communion.

But besides the express Command
 of CHRIST, and the spiritual
 Benefits which the Participa-
 tion of the Body and Blood
 conveys to every sincere Re-
 ceiver in a *supernatural* Way ;
 a further Inducement and
 Obligation to frequent Communion, is
 that in a *natural* Way, it is the immediate
 Means and Occasion of stirring up in our
 Hearts many Godly Thoughts and Con-
 siderations, which exceedingly tend to arm
 us against Sin, and to improve and es-
 tablish us in the Ways of Godliness.

FOR Instance ;

1. Remem-
 brance of our
 Christianity. I. THE Cares and Pur-
 suits of this World, how-
 ever innocent in themselves,
 are apt to withdraw Men's
 Thoughts from the Things of the next Life,
 and

and to bring them by Degrees to an habitual Forgetfulness even of their Christianity, and of the Relation they bear, and the Obligations they owe to the Author and Founder of our Religion, the Lord JESUS CHRIST. But the *Holy Sacrament* being a Service peculiar to Christians, and that by which they are chiefly distinguished from Men of all other Religions, keeps up in their Minds a lively Sense of their Christian Profession, and of the Relation and Union that is between them and CHRIST their Head. Not only the *Jews*, but the *Mahometans* and *Heathens*, worship GOD, and offer up Prayers and Praises to the Being from whom they receive their Blessings. But the Service peculiar to Christians (that which leads them to a clear and lively View of the Founder of their Religion, and that by which they chiefly declare and profess themselves Christians) is the shewing or setting forth the Sufferings of CHRIST for the Sins of the World, by joining in the Communion of his Body and Blood. Insomuch, that in the early

Ages

Ages of Christianity, an habitual Abstaining from this Holy Sacrament would have been judged a Renouncing of Christianity itself; as, no doubt, the frequent Attendance on it, is an excellent Means to confirm and establish us more and more in our Faith, and to enliven our Hope and Trust in the Merits of a crucified Saviour.

2. **T**H E noblest and most worthy Motive of our Obedience, is the *Love of God*: And as the most effectual Way to raise and cherish that Love in our Hearts, is the frequent Remembrance of God's Love to us; so the highest Instance and Testimony of his Love, is our Redemption from Sin and Eternal Death, by the Blood of his own Son. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, John iii. 16.* — *Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends, John xv. 13.* — *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners (and so his Enemies) Christ died for us, Rom. v. 8.*

2. Improvement in our Love of God.

— *Herein*

—Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, 1 John iv. 10. Now, this great Evidence of his Love is set before us in the Holy Sacrament after such a sensible and affecting Manner, as cannot fail of engaging all those to a suitable Return of Love and Obedience, who, by their often repeating that Memorial of his Mercy and Goodness, keep up in their Hearts a lively Sense of their Obligations to him.

3. THAT which makes Men careless of their Ways, and presumptuous in offending God, is 3. Sense of the Want of considering how the Evil of Sin.

provoking and abominable a Thing Sin is in his Sight; a due Sense of which would be a perpetual Restraint from it. Now, as often as we receive the Holy Sacrament, we have before us the utmost Expressions of God's Wrath and indignation against Sin, inasmuch as no Atonement could make Satisfaction for Sin, or reconcile the Sinner to him, but the Death of his own Son, which we are then

then commemorating. The Destruction of the old World by the Flood, and the raining of Fire and Brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, were dreadful Testimonies of his Displeasure against Sin, but infinitely higher and more terrible is this Expression of his Displeasure against it, that when **CHRIST** had undertaken our Deliverance from the Wrath of **GOD**, no less Atonement could satisfy the Divine Justice, than those Agonies and Sufferings of his own dearly beloved Son. We see him, to all outward Appearance, forsaken of **GOD**, and ready to sink under the Weight of our Sins; his Body torn, and his Blood shed, and he undergoing all the Miseries of a most painful, bitter and ignominious Death: all which the Sacrament of his Body and Blood is designed to set before us in the most lively and affecting Manner, and by that to imprint and revive upon our Minds a just Sense of the Abhorrence that **GOD** has of Sin, and the suitable Dread that Men ought to have of committing it.

4. THEY who have continued long in their Sins, and others whose Constitution, or Mistakes in Religion, have led them to desponding Thoughts, are apt to *despair* of Mercy and Pardon at the Hands of GOD. And in this Condition, there is no where such Comfort, as in the Blessed Sacrament, which is not only a perpetual Assurance to Mankind of GOD's Readiness to receive and admit them to the renewing of their Covenant with him, but also a *visible Pledge and Seal* of the Pardon of their Sins, upon their Faith and Repentance.

4. Remedy against Despair.

5. ALTHOUGH nothing can be more necessary than a due *Knowledge* of the Sins of our Lives, in order to our repenting of them ; yet there is no Work which the Generality of Christians are more willing to avoid and put off, than the Examination of their Lives. So that it is to be feared such Examinations are seldom set about, and thoroughly performed, but by those religious Persons who frequent the

5. Knowledge of our spiritual State.

the Holy Sacrament, and who, by obliging themselves to that, in Obedience to the Command of C H R I S T, do at the same Time oblige themselves to a serious Consideration of their Lives; that having made up all Breaches between GOD and them by a sincere Repentance, they may be in a proper Frame and Disposition of Soul to renew their Covenant with him. By which Means, this necessary Work of Examination (however ungrateful and difficult to lukewarm Christians, who let their Accounts run on for Want of fixt Times to state and settle them) is, by being so often repeated, both easy and delightful to the frequent Communicant.

6. THE *Vows and Resolutions* which

6 Keeping our Vows of Obedience. Christians make before GOD, concerning spiritual Matters, are much less remembered

and regarded, than the Promises they make to Men in the Affairs of this Life. The Cares and Business of this World turn our Minds from heavenly to earthly Thoughts, and Temptations often drive us from our Religious Resolutions and

and Time it self wears away the Remembrance of them. Against all which Evils and Mischiefs, the true and effectual Remedy is, the frequent Receiving of the Holy Sacrament; which gives us Occasion to repeat our Vows often, and not only keeps them fresh upon our Minds, but makes us *afraid* to break them, considering that at the next Celebration of that holy Ordinance, (which, with the frequent Communicant can never be far off) we must call ourselves to a strict Account for it.

7. **NOTHING** is more contrary to the Gospel of **CHRIST**, nor more dangerous to the Souls of Men, than the living in *Wrath, Envy and Malice*. And

yet so many are the Provocations which we meet with in the Course of our Business and Conversation, that there are few Sins to which Mankind are more exposed, and which being once rooted in the Heart, are more hardly plucked out, than these. And amidst the many Temptations to Malice and Revenge, the true

7. Remedy
against Ma-
lice.

Way

Way to be safe and innocent, is to come frequently to the Holy Sacrament; in our Preparations whereunto, we are more particularly bound to examine our Hearts upon that Head. *Matt. v. 23, 24.* *If thou bringest thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, Leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* Add to this, that the communicating in this holy Ordinance represents to our Minds some of the most forcible Motives to Forgiveness and Charity. There we see in how gracious a Manner the Great GOD of HEAVEN and EARTH pardons the Offences of his Creatures, and is reconciled to them. We see by Faith, the Son of GOD even dying for us, while we were Enemies to him. And we see ourselves united with the Congregation of Christian People in one Body, under CHRIST our Head; *for we being many, are one Bread, and one Body* (*1 Cor. x. 17.*) Or, if these Considerations do not work us into a charitable Disposition, we remember that

one

one great End of our coming thither, is to sue for the Pardon of our Sins ; and we are very sure, that GOD will not forgive us, unless we also forgive our Fellow-Creatures. And thus, by obliging ourselves to receive the Holy Sacrament frequently, the Roots of Malice and Envy are kept under, and, by Degrees, rooted up, which would otherwise overspread the whole Heart.

8. As all the Blessings of GOD require suitable Acknowledgements on our Part ; so especially his infinite Love and Mercy in the Redemption of Mankind ought to be often remembered and dwelt upon by every Christian. How seldom this is in any Measure performed by those who neglect the Blessed Sacrament, I need not say, because their own Consciences know it ; but this I must say, that it is high Presumption in any Christian to hope for the Benefits of CHRIST's Redemption, while he shews himself altogether insensible of them, by refusing to join with his Fellow-Christians in this Sacrifice of

Praise

Praise and Thanksgiving, which CHRIST appointed, and the Church of CHRIST continues, in Remembrance of them : Where Societies of devout and sincere Christians assemble together, with one Heart and one Voice, to celebrate the Wisdom and Goodness of GOD in the Redemption of Mankind, and to profess and confirm their Faith in CHRIST crucified ; and, by remembering the miserable State out of which they are delivered, and the glorious Hopes of which they are made Partakers through the Merits of CHRIST's Death, do fill their Hearts with spiritual Joy, and pour out their Souls before GOD in Praises and Adoration.

THESE are some of the blessed Advantages which flow from the ^{The Sum.} due and frequent Receiving of the Holy Sacrament ; That it puts us in Mind of the Relation we bear to CHRIST, and of our manifold Obligations to love and obey him ; That it is a Check to *Presumption*, by shewing GOD's Hatred of Sin ; and a Remedy against *Despair*, by

by representing his Mercy to penitent Sinners; That it will not suffer us to go on securely in the Transgression of our Duty, but awakens our Consciences, and obliges us to examine our Lives, and renew our Vows of Obedience, and raises us from these earthly Thoughts (in which our Souls would otherwise be buried) to the Heavenly Exercises of praising and adoring our Creator and Redeemer. That is, in a few Words, it obliges us to live up to our Profession, and as becomes the Gospel of CHRIST.

AND these Considerations being laid to Heart as seriously as they ought, cannot fail of obliging and disposing of all, who are in Earnest in Religion, and resolve to be Christians in *Deed* as well as Name, to repair frequently to the LORD's Table, which is so excellent a Means to preserve their Innocence, and improve them in all Christian Graces and Virtues; especially since it is the Means which CHRIST himself hath appointed for these Ends, and being observed in Obedience to his

Com-

Command, will be always attended with a more especial Blessing. And as the Neglect of this holy Ordinance is a high Contempt of the Authority of our Saviour, who commanded Christians to continue this Remembrance of his Dying for them ; so for us to think that our *Souls* can be nourished and grow up to eternal Life, without a Religious Use of the Ordinances which CHRIST hath appointed for that End, is as vain a Thing, as to hope that our *Bodies* can live and grow without their proper Nourishment.

BUT notwithstanding all this, I doubt there are very many Christians, who, though they seldom or never come to the Lord's Table, do yet reckon themselves sufficiently concerned for their Eternal Happiness. Which Happiness being in itself unspeakably great, and also a Deliverance from endless Misery, cannot but be earnestly desired and wished for by all, if bare *Wishes* would bring them to it. But it is a great Folly, and a dangerous Delusion, to imagine that we are in Earnest for the End, while we are visibly negligent of the

the Means ; that is, that we do above all Things desire the Salvation of our Souls when there is Nothing we neglect more than the Holy Ordinances and Exercises which CHRIST hath appointed, as the standing Means to obtain and secure it. So that they do but flatter themselves into their own Destruction, who either hope for Heaven without a holy Life, or believè that Holines of Heart and Life can be bred and cherished in us by any other Way, than that which CHRIST hath ap- printed. And therefore let none believe that they take due Care of their Souls, or are in the Way of Salvation, while they live in a wilful Neglect of the blessed Sacrament ; but rather let them make their avoiding it, a certain Sign that their Hearts are carnal and worldly, and averse to the Thoughts of Heaven and heavenly Things. And let them never think well of their spiritual State, 'till they have brought themselves to a serious Examination of their Lives, and a hearty Repentance for their past Sins, and so have made themselves fit to receive this Seal of GOD's Pardon

C and

S E C T III.

How groundless the Excuses and Pretences are for not Coming to the Holy Sacrament.

CONSIDERING the express Command of our Blessed Saviour to continue this Remembrance of his Death, until his Coming again, and also the many spiritual Benefits accruing to every Christian by a religious Obedience to that Command ; it is Matter of great Wonder that so many Persons, who call themselves Christians, can live securely in an open Neglect and Contempt of it. And it is likewise Matter of great Grief, and a sad Argument.

Argument of the Lukewarmness and Irreligion of these Times, to see the Generality of Christians so willing to *Excuse* themselves from partaking of an Ordinance, which CHRIST instituted for the Refreshment of their Souls, and the conveying to them new Supplies of spiritual Life and Strength.

SOME are going on in a Course of Wickedness, (as Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleanness, Revenge, Injustice, and the like) and they will not come to the Sacrament, because in that Condition they know they are utterly unfit for it. To whom we can only say, that it is in their Power to make themselves fit, by forsaking their Sins; and if they will not forsake them, the same sinful Course which keeps them from the Sacrament, will certainly shut them out of the Kingdom of Heaven. And one would hope, that this Reflection should awaken and startle the most desperate Sinner, and not suffer him, when he is invited to renew his Covenant with GOD and to seek for Grace to enable him to

The Case of
wicked Persons.

perform the Condition on his Part, to tell GOD, That he is wicked, and will continue so ; or, which is the same in Effect, That he resolves to go to Hell, in Spite of all the Means which GOD, in great Mercy, has provided to carry him to Heaven.

B U T there are others, who have so much Sense of Religion, as is sufficient to restrain them from

The Case
of lukewarm
Persons.

living in any notorious Sin ; and who, out of Conscience,

or Shame, or some other Motive, do at least attend the Ordinances of *Prayer* and *Preaching* : But as to the *Lord's Supper*, they will not be prevailed with to come to that, because it requires such a Course of Preparation as none can go through, but they who have much greater Leisure from the Business of this World than Providence has given them, and they are very well aware of the extreme Danger of Receiving it unworthily, or without due Preparation. Which Excuse, carrying in it something of Reverence to that holy Institution, not only keeps very many Persons from com-

ing

ing to the Sacrament, and makes their Minds easy under a direct Disobedience to the Command of CHRIST, and the Pre-judice they do to their spiritual Estate ; but it oft-times leads them to censure others of the same Condition with themselves, as rash and profane, for *presuming* to Receive it. And since these Mischiefs arise from some common Mistakes con-

Mistakes con-
cerning De-
grees of Prepa-
ration.

cerning the *Degrees of Preparation* that are necessary to the due Receiving of the Holy Sacrament ; the proper Way to remove the Mistakes, is to give a plain and clear Account of the necessary Preparation. That carnal and worldly-minded Men (who if their Leisure were ever so great, have no Hearts to set about such a spiritual Exercise) may not colour over their Neglects by this Pretence of wanting Time ; nor others be discouraged without Cause, whose Hearts are really Religious, and who are willing and ready to make the best Preparation that their Condition and Circumstances will allow.

To these Ends, let it be observed, That there are two Kinds of Preparation required of those who come to renew their Covenant with GOD in the Holy Sacrament ; but these two not equally necessary.

I. THE first is, the Preparation of an *Honest and Upright Heart* ; as it shews itself in a Willingness to forfaze all Sin, and a conscientious Desire

An Honest Heart the first Preparation.
and Resolution to serve and please GOD, in the general Course of a sober, virtuous and good Life. This is a Frame and Disposition of Soul, in which every Christian is bound constantly to live : And all Persons, High and Low, Rich and Poor, being equally capable of living in such a Frame, GOD absolutely requires it of all, as an indispensable Condition of being his Servants, and continuing in Covenant with him. So that it would be great Mockery in Men, to make a Shew in living in Covenant with GOD, while they know they are in Covenant with their Sins ; or to pretend that they desire Grace to deliver them from their Sins, while they really care not

to

to be delivered from them, nay, while they resolve to live under the Dominion of them.

THE Preparation then that is *Absolutely* and *Indispesibly* required for the due Receiving of the Blessed Saerament, is such an honest and sincere Heart ; and without such a Heart, no Office of Religion whatever is duly performed. No Man comes rightly prepared to hear the Word *Preeched*, but he who brings an *honest and good Heart*, (Luke viii. 15.) or, a Heart sincerely resolved to practise what he hears. Nor are we fit to pray to God, except we *lift up holy Hands*, (1 Tim. ii. 8.) with a sincere Desire after the Graces and Virtues which we pray for. So that whatever Difference Men may make between their Receiving the *Holy Sacrament*, and performing the other Offices of Religion ; this is a certain Truth, that neither *Hearing* nor *Praying*, nor any other Religious Office, can be performed duly, and with Benefit, except there be an Honest and Upright *Heart* ; and he who has that, has the only Thing that is *Absolutely* and *Indispesibly* required to the worthy Receiving of the *Holy Sacrament*.

'T is true, the Sacrament of CHRIST's Body and Blood, being the most solemn Ordinance of our Religion, wherein we present ourselves before GOD, to humble ourselves for our Sins, and renew our Resolutions of Obedience, and thereupon to implore Mercy and Grace at his Hands ; it follows, that the Guilt of unworthy Receiving must be greater in Proportion, than the undue Performance of any other Religious Office. And the Scripture has accordingly annexed to it a special Punishment, (1 Cor. xi. 29.) *He that eateth and drinketh Unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself.* For although it is certain, that by *Damnation*, in this Place, the Apostle means Sicknes and other Judgments upon the Body, (*For this Cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep,* 1 Cor. xi. 30.) yet it is as certain, that whoever pretences to come to the Lord's Table, without such an honest and sincere Heart as hath been described, is liable to Eternal Damnation, till he repent of that his Presumption, and reform his wicked Heart. But then it must also be remembered, That

they

they who have not such Honest and Sincere Hearts are in a State of Damnation, whether they come to the Holy Sacrament or not: because the Sentence of Damnation is not inflicted upon such Men, barely for Receiving the Sacrament unworthily, but chiefly for living and dying with corrupt Hearts: The Guilt whereof is indeed *Aggravated* by the Presumption and Hypocrisy of making open Vows of Obedience, with secret Resolutions to continue in Disobedience: But as long as the Heart of a Man is not right in the Sight of God, he has nothing to expect but eternal Damnation, altho' he never come to the Holy Sacrament; and moreover such a Heart renders him unfit to serve God with Benefit in any other Office of Religion whatsoever: Nay, even it makes his Prayer (*Prov. xv. 8.*) *an Abomination to the Lord,*

Now, this Account removes several Mistakes, which help to encourage Men in a Neglect of the Holy Sacrament, As,

1. WHEREAS many, who will not think of forsaking their Sins, are apt to judge themselves more safe as to their Salvation, by never receiving the Holy Sacrament; they see from hence, that whether they receive or not, they are in a State of Condemnation, and the final Sentence will be the same.

2. WHEREAS others reckon, that they may please GOD, and improve sufficiently in Religion, by attending the Publick Worship in the Church, tho' they do not come to the Holy Sacrament; the foregoing Account shews them, that except they have such Desires and Resolutions as will fit them for the Holy Sacrament, their *Praying* and *Hearing* is vain and ineffectual. When they can resolve to forsake their Sins, and reform their Lives, they are fit to partake of the Lord's Table; and till they come to these Resolutions, they are utterly unfit for all Acts and Offices of Religion.

3. WHEREAS some good *Christians* reckoning it hard to judge when they are duly prepared, are discouraged from receiving

ceiving at all, by the Fears of Receiving unworthily ; they see here, that the great Rule whereby they are to judge of their Fitness or Unfitness, is the present Disposition and Resolution of their own Hearts, concerning which, no Man can possibly be mistaken.

4. WHEREAS Men are wont to make a great Difference between their being in a State of Salvation, and in a fitness to receive the Holy Sacrament ; this shews them, that nothing is absolutely required for the due Receiving of the Holy Sacrament, but what is also absolutely required to put them in a State of Salvation ; namely, a sincere Desire and Intention of Heart, to avoid all Sin, and to do our Duty to the utmost of our Powers. They who heartily mean *that*, are never unprepared for the Holy Sacrament ; and they who mean it not, are certainly unprepared for Heaven.

II. THE other Sort of *Preparation*, is, the *Examination* of our past Lives, and the humbling our Souls before

A certain
Space of Time
not necessary
to our Prepa-
ration.

God,

GOD, by the Consideration of our manifold Sins and Infirmities, and the raising our Thoughts and Affections from the Things of this World to the Business of the next, by suitable Prayers and Meditations. For this ordinance, being the highest and most solemn Institution of our Religion, ought not to be celebrated by Christians, but with great Seriousness, Devotion, and Reverence ; and our Business there, being to renounce our Sins in the Presence of **GOD**, the more particularly we know our Sins, and the deeper our Sense is of the Evil and Vileness of them, the more heartily and effectually shall we renounce them, and pray more earnestly for the Grace of **GOD** to deliver us from them.

BUT as to the *Space or Time* required for such a *Preparation* ; that depends upon the Circumstances of particular Persons, and the *Temporal*, as well as the *Spiritual* Condition of each. As to the *Spiritual* Condition of Men, some have lived in their Sins a long Time, and given themselves over to the Cares and Pleasures of

this

Sect. III. *to the Holy Sacrament,* 61
this World, have gone on in an habitual Neglect of their spiritual State, and the Things belonging to the next Life. And such Persons, at their first *Entrance* upon a new Course, must be at greater Pains in examining their Lives, and in coming to a right Knowledge of their spiritual State, and in raising their Souls to a Devout and Heavenly Frame, than is necessary in the Case of others, who have come frequently to the holy Sacrament, and been careful of their Ways, and have accustomed their Hearts to Heavenly Thoughts and Meditations.

AGAIN, as to Mens *Temporal* Conditions; There are many who, by the Blessing of Providence, are freed from the Necessity of daily Labour; and it may be reasonably expected, that such should bestow larger Portions of their Time in this Preparation, according to the Degrees of Leisure which GOD hath given them, But this is no Rule to others, whom GOD has obliged to provide for themselves and their Families, by the Labour of their Hands, and from whom therefore he expects no longer

longer Preparation, than what their Condition and Circumstances will conveniently allow. No Condition is so much encumbered, but some Time will be found for this Work, where Men have a real Desire to go about it ; and if they honestly employ that in the Preparation of themselves God will undoubtedly accept them, and can easily supply the Want of more Time, by a larger Measure of his Holy Spirit. Let them only make sure of a Heart firmly resolved to forsake Sin, and sincerely disposed to the Duties and Offices of Religion ; and such a Heart will not suffer them to fail of doing as much as their Condition will permit, and by Consequence as much as God, who placed them in that Condition, requires. In all such Cases, the Apostle is clear, (2 Cor. viii. 3.) *If there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted according to that a Man bath, and not according to that bath not.*

Other Pretences considered.

HAVING endeavoured to give such a general Account of the Preparation necessary to the Holy Sacrament, as to

to leave no Room for making the *Wants of Time* a just Excuse from Receiving it, whatever a Man's Condition in the World may be ; I will go on to remove some other Objections, which are also grounded upon an extraordinary *Reverence*, that Men pretend for this holy Institution. For although there is no Way to pay a just Regard and Reverence to it, but coming to the Lord's Table devoutly and frequently, in Obedience to the Command of CHRIST : yet so easily are many Persons imposed on, and so willing to be deceived in this great Point of the *Christian Religion*, that they reckon it a much higher Testimony of Reverence, to Abstain, than to Receive : Nay, they content themselves with Arguments against the Receiving it, which of all others should persuade them to come frequently to it :

For Instance,

1. There are many who reason thus ; that they could heartily wish they were more disengaged from the Business of the World ;

1. The Cares
of the World.

but

but since this is not their Lot, they dare not approach so heavenly an Institution with Hearts so much possessed and infected with Earthly Cares. But let such Persons consider, 1. That the *Christian Religion* allows no Man, whatever his Condition be, to engage his Heart so far in the Affairs of this World, as to neglect the Care of his Soul, and the Concerns of the next Life : And therefore, whoever pleads that he is unfit for the Holy Sacrament, because his Heart is over-run with the Cares of the World, confesses that he leads a very Unchristian Life. They who were bidden to the Supper in the Gospel, (*Luke xiv. 16.*) excused themselves from coming, upon their worldly Concerns ; but were, notwithstanding such Excuses, pronounced unworthy of the Heavenly Feast, for preferring their temporal Busines before their Eternal Welfare. 2. Let them consider further, that no Man is rendered unfit for the Sacrament by the Cares and Busines of his Life, who pursues them with Moderation and Honesty, with a due Regard to the Laws of GOD, and his good Providence

dence over us ; and whoever pursues them otherwise, makes himself unfit for Heaven. 3. That the Business of this World, when pursued and managed under a due Sense of GOD's Providence, who has appointed the Work, and under such Rules of Justice, and Honesty, and Moderation, as he has prescribed, is so far from being a Reason why we cannot prepare ourselves that it is itself the chief Preparation, and (as we have already seen) the only Preparation that is *absolutely* and *necessarily* required. 4. That the Hearts of Men being apt to dwell too much upon the Things of this World, and to be buried in the Cares and Concerns of it ; GOD, as a Remedy against that Evil, has provided the Holy Ordinances of the Gospel, to raise our Souls from the Earth, and to replenish them from Time to Time with Heavenly Thoughts and Meditations. And therefore, 5. Instead of making the Cares of this Life an Excuse from the Holy Sacrament ; as many as desire in good Earnest to live like Christians, and at the same Time find themselves much engaged in

66 *Pretences for not Coming* Part I.
in the Affairs of this World, will upon
that very Account, be careful, in attending
the Ordinances of Religion, in order to
withdraw their Thoughts from these
Worldly Concerns, and to receive upon
their Souls, such a Sense of Heaven and
Heavenly Things, as may keep them from
being buried in the Cares of this Life.

2, Their own 2. OTHERS pretend, that
Vileness. they could be very willing
to come to the Sacrament; but when they
look back upon their past Lives, they
see so much Sin and Corruption, and are
so much humbled and dejected at the Sight
of it, that they cannot think themselves
in any Measure worthy to partake of so
Divine an Institution. Whereas such a
Sense of their Vileness (when it produces a
Resolution to cast off the Sins which have
made them so vile) is the first Qualifica-
tion of a worthy Receiver, as it is the
first Step towards our Reconciliation to
GOD, and our being received into Cove-
nant with him. They whom CHRIST
particularly *invites* to come to him, with
Promises of Pardon, and Comfort, and
spiritual

spiritual Strength, (*Matt. xi. 28*) are such only as being *Weary* under the Sense and Burden of their Sins, do therefore *Desire* to be delivered from them. For it is an idle Pretence in Men, to say that they are *Ashamed* of their Vileness ; while they resolve to keep their Sins, which they know will make them every Day viler.

3. A Third Sort are afraid to come to the Holy Sacra-
ment, because of the many
and great Temptations with which the daily
Business and Profession of their Lives is
accompanied ; and they cannot think it the
Part of a good *Christian*, to enter into so-
lemn Vows and Resolutions, which by
reason of such Temptations they despair
of keeping. To this I answer, That it is
very true, some Callings and Professions,
do lay Men open to more Temptations
than others ; but no Calling or Profession,
that is just and honest, can expose any
Man to Temptations, which may not be
overcome with Care and Watchfulness, and
the Assistance of God's Grace. And as such
a Foresight of Temptations will induce
every

3. Tempta-
tions to break
their Vows.

every Christian, who heartily desires to live innocently in his Vocation, to come often to the Holy Sacrament for new Supplies of Strength to resist them ; so they who make the Greatness of the Temptations they shall meet with, a Reason for abstaining from the Sacrament, do in Effect *give up* themselves to the Enjoyment of their Lusts, which, in other Words, is to give up themselves to *Eternal Destruction*. .

4. Mistake
that such
Breaches are
unpardonable.

4. THERE is yet another Sort who are discouraged from coming to the Lord's Table, not only by the Probability of their falling afterwards into Sin, but by a Persuasion that Sin committed after the Holy Sacrament will never be forgiven. Which is so far from being true, that one good Reason why Christians should come *Frequently* to the Holy Sacrament, is, the frequent Breaches of their Duty, and by Consequence the frequent Occasions they have to renew their Covenant with GOD. For if we could live in a State of Innocence, we should have no Need of *Renewing* our Covenant with him ; but

but because through the Frailty of our corrupt Nature, and the manifold Temptations that encompass us, we so frequently break our Part of the Covenant; therefore it is, that we have frequent Need to make up the Breach, and upon our Repentance for what is past, and Resolutions of Obedience from Time to come, to have our Pardon sealed, and new Supplies of Grace conveyed to us by a due Participation of this sacred Ordinance.

'Tis true, as oft as we come to renew our Covenant with GOD, we engage to forsake our Sins by very solemn Vows and Resolutions; and these are a great Restraint from falling again into Sin; so whoever makes such Vows with a sincere *Desire* to be delivered from his Sins, and remembering them afterwards, is watchful over his *Ways*, and prays for the Grace of GOD to enable him to perform them, and so strives to get the Mastery over his Sins, and to come daily nearer to Perfection; such a Man is certainly in a State of Salvation, and his honest Endeavours will be accepted of GOD, altho' he never arrives to a State of

Inno-

Innocence ; which no Man, except our Blessed Saviour, ever did, or ever can do. For as long as we continue in this World it will be true, even of the best Men, that *If we say we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.* But then it is as true, that our Sins become much less, and our Righteousness much greater, by frequently renewing our Vows of Obedience in this solemn Manner. And as to the Sins, which notwithstanding these Vows, and our sincerest Endeavours to perform them, we may afterwards fall into, GOD gives us a lively Assurance in these Holy Mysteries, that *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for them.* Altho' therefore Men not only *may* fall into Sin, but are very sure that they shall be sinning more or less, as long as they continue in this frail and corrupt State ; yet is this no Reason to abstain from the Sacrament, but a very powerful one why we should receive it Frequently ; as it is the Means, both of making us less sinful by far than we otherwise should be, and of raising and

en-

enlivening our Faith in CHRIST, for the Pardon of all those Sins, which notwithstanding a conscientious Care and Diligence on our Part, we either have committed, or may hereafter commit.

5. T H E foregoing Error

“ That there is no Pardon
“ for Sins committed after
“ the Receiving of the Holy

5. Never to
Receive but
upon their
Death-Bed.

“ Sacrament,” has been the Occasion of another unhappy and dangerous Mistake, That the Way for Christians to be safe, is, never to receive the Blessed Sacrament but upon their Death-Bed, or when all Hope of living longer in this World is over. As if the Sacrament of CHRIST’s Body and Blood was a *Charm*, that would save Men whether they will or no ; or had been instituted to encourage them in Wickedness all their Lives upon an Assurance that it will carry them to Heaven when they die ; or lastly, as if the Virtues and Benefits of it could belong to such Persons who know not when, in what Manner, or for what End it was instituted, and who are so far from being prepared for it, that they know

know not what Preparations are necessary ; which is usually the Case of those, who never desire it till they find the Approach of Death. For what Preparation can Men be supposed to make, who begin not to think of it till they are seized with the Pains, Infirmities, or the Agonies of a Dying-bed ; with so short Warning, and under such Weakness of Body and Confusion (if not Distraction) of Mind, how should Men immediately receive Instruction concerning the highest and most solemn Ordinance of the Gospel, or in any Measure recollect and confess before GOD the Sins of a whole Life together ? At their Death, and oft-times in their old Age, they want to be taught the Things which Christians are bound to learn betimes in their Youth. When they are going out of the World, they only *begin* to desire and think of that *Bread from Heaven*, which GOD designed for their spiritual Nourishment in their Passage through it. By the very Means which he appointed for a daily Restraint from sinning, they hope at once to wash away the whole Guilt of going on securely in

in a long **Life of Sin** ; and in the same Day or **Hour** that they are first taught what the **Sacrament** is, and what is necessary to prepare them for the worthy Receiving of it ; the Preparation itself is at once to be begun, carried on, and finished.

IT is natural for Men, in the Time of their Extremity, to desire whatever they think may *possibly* do them Good. But none who understand the Nature of this Holy Ordinance, can suppose that Persons in such Circumstances, do really receive the Benefits of it on a Dying-Bed ; or that it is by any Means proper to administer it to *them*, and by that to encourage *others* in a Neglect of the Blessed Sacrament all the while they are in Health, by the Hopes of obtaining a general Pardon upon such easy Terms when they come to die. For whatever such Persons may think, who have neglected the Care of their Souls till it is too late, and who being alarmed by the Approach of Death, are willing to make the best of the short Space that remains ; the Hope and Comfort they then raise to themselves from Receiving the Holy Sacra-

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ment before they die, it is not to be relied on. And it is fit, that they who are yet in their Youth, or at least in their Health, should be warned betimes not to rely upon it ; but, instead of flattering themselves with such uncertain Hopes, they are to be warned to enter immediately upon the only sure Way ; which is also a plain and clear Way ; namely, To instruct themselves in the true Nature and Design of this holy Institution, and then going through the Preparations requisite to make them worthy Partakers, according to the Degrees of Leisure which their Circumstances will allow, to be frequently at the L O R D ' s Table in the Time of their Health ; that when they come to Die, they may understand the State of their Souls, and have Hearts accustomed to the Thoughts of Heaven and heavenly Things, and be habitually fitted and prepared to receive these holy Mysteries, as the Pledges of God's final Pardon, and a most comfortable Support under the Agonies of a Dying Bed.

P A R T



P A R T. II.

. S E C T. I.

*Of the Particular Preparations for the
due Receiving of the Holy Sacra-
ment.*

WE have seen in the *First Part*, that one general Preparation which is absolutely necessary to make us worthy Partakers of the Lord's Table, is a sincere Intention to forsake Sin, and serve God ; or, as the Apostle speaks, (*1 Cor. v. 8.*) the eating this Christian Passover *in Sincerity and Truth.*

Particular
Preparation of
the Heart re-
quisite.

BUT besides this, as oft as any *Christian* designs to Receive the Holy Sacrament, it is convenient that he fit himself (in such Measure as his Condition in the World will allow) by a more particular Preparation. For this being the highest and most solemn Institution of the Christian Religion, and being also a Work of a holy and heavenly Nature, the Heart (which alone can perform it) must be withdrawn from the Thoughts and Business of the World, and put into a holy and heavenly Frame, suitable to the Business it is to be employed about. This is a Reverence due to all the Offices of Religion, in which we present ourselves before a God of Purity and Holiness, professing to have set apart those Seasons for the Care of our Souls, and the Consideration of heavenly Things. So we read in the Old Testament of *Preparing our Hearts unto the Lord*, (1 Sam. vii. 3.) and of *Preparing the Heart to seek God*, (2 Chron. xix. 3.) and *to seek the Law of the Lord*, (Ezra vii. 10.)

BUT

But more directly is it to our present Purpose, that none were to eat the *Passover*, (in the Place of which the Holy Sacrament was instituted) but such as had *cleansed* and *purified* themselves. And this was understood by pious Men, not only of the outward Impurities of their Bodies, but also of the inward Defilements of their Souls; which were to be cleaned and put into a pious and obedient Frame, as the chief Preparation for eating the *Passover*; according to the Practice of good King *Hezekiah*, (2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.) *For a Multitude of the People had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover, otherwise than it was written: But Hezekiah prayed for them saying, The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his Heart to seek God.* And we read in our Saviour's Days, (John xi. 55.) *That many went out of the Country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to Purify themselves.* In the Course of which Purification, we cannot imagine that the more devout and pious among them rested in the bare Ceremonies

The Preparation before the Passover.

78 *Particular Preparations* Part II.

monies of offering Sacrifices for Legal Impurities, or the like; but may well suppose, that they employed their Time also in paying their Vows and Fasting, and confessing their Sins, and the like Preparations; in order to their appearing before GOD on that solemn Occasion: agreeable to *those Preparations in the Heart to seek God* in the Days of *Hezekiah*, and to the true Meaning of the outward Washings and Purifyings of the Body among the Jews, before they entered upon their Offices of Religion. For these really signified and prefigured that inward Cleannels and Purity of Heart, with which Christians are always to appear before GOD; and which *David*, a Type of CHRIST, expresses in the xxvith *Psalm*, at the 9th Verse, *I will wash my Hands in Innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to thine Altar.* But more especially it is to be supposed, that pious and devout People among the Jews prepared their Heart for celebrating the Passover, by a deep Sense and Impression of the Goodness of GOD to their Nation in delivering them from their Slavery in

Egypt,

Egypt, and putting them in possession of the promised Land, and maintaining them in that Possession, by strengthening their Hands against their Enemies round about. And a just Sense of those Blessings must of course produce in them great Thankfulness, with repeated Vows and Resolutions, that, as he had been to them a gracious God, so they woul'd be to him an obedient People ; as we find the Commerations of GOD's Goodness, and the Paying of Vows, joined together by the Psalmist (Psal. cxvi. 12, 13.) I will receive the Cup of Salvation, — I will pay my Vows in the Presence of all his People.

THESE and the like Preparations of Heart, were very natural and indeed necessary for the due Celebration of the Passover: and those among the Jews who did not take Care that their Celebration of it should be accompanied with these Religious Thoughts and Resolutions, but eat it as an ordinary Feast, without attending to the true End and Purpose of the In- St. Paul's Precept of Examining and Judging ourselves, considered and explained.

St. Paul's
Precept of Examining and Judging ourselves, considered and explained.

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stitution, and possessing their Hearts with suitable Thoughts and Resolutions ; all such did undoubtedly eat the Passover *unworthily*. Just as the *Corinthians* eat the Supper of the Lord *unworthily*, when they celebrated it as an ordinary Feast, and did not *discern the Lord's Body* ; that is, did not duly distinguish this from other common Feasts, by attending to the true End and Meaning of the Institution, and by eating in a Manner suitable thereunto. The particular Abuse which St. *Paul* reproved, was, that their *Feast of Charity*, which then accompanied the *Lord's Supper*, was eaten by them in a disorderly Manner ; the Rich shutting out the Poor, and feeding by themselves, with the Freedoms and Excesses practised at their common Feasts. But since the *Ground* and *Reason* of his condemning those Practices, was the *Unsuitableness* of them to the Nature and End of that holy Institution, (as they divided the Members of **CHRIST**'s Body, and changed a spiritual into a carnal Feast) there can be no Doubt, but any *other* Defect or Irregularity, which had

Sect. II. *for the Holy Sacrament.* 81

had been equally unsuitable to the Nature and End of it, would have been equally condemned by him. From whence it follows in the first Place, that St. Paul's Censure of unworthy Receiving, with the Judgment denounced against it, is by no means to be restrained to those two Defects, but to be equally extended to all others which are not agreeable to the *Nature* and *End* of the Institution ; and, in the next Place, that to judge of the Qualifications of a worthy Receiver, we must look back to the Account already given of the Nature and End of this Holy Institution ; the right Knowledge of which will suggest to us *what* the Preparations are ; and our attending to them, and dwelling upon them, will naturally work those Preparations in us.

THE Celebration of the Lord's Supper is not the Eating of a common Meal, but the Performance of a solemn Office of Religion, which CHRIST himself has appointed ; and, therefore Christians ought to come to it with Seriousness and Circumspection.

The proper
Preparations
for the Lord's
Supper ga-
thered from
the *Nature* and
End of that
Institution.

It is not designed for the Nourishment of the Body, but for the Refreshment of the Soul; and therefore the Soul must be put in a proper Disposition to receive it, and feed upon it. It is a lively Representation of C H R I S T's dying for the Sins of Mankind; and therefore to answer the End of the Institution, the Soul must be possessed, as with a just Sense of the Sufferings of C H R I S T's and his Love to Mankind, so with a due Measure of Faith and Hope, and Trust in his Merits. It is an Office of Praise and Thanksgiving, for the greatest Deliverance and Blessing that was ever vouchsafed to Men, or that Mankind was capable of Receiving, namely, the Redeeming us from Eternal Death, and restoring us to the Favour of G O D, and making us Partakers of Everlasting Life; and therefore, to celebrate it aright, the Soul must come prepared with a due Sense, as well of the extreme Misery of our Condition without a Redeemer, as of the Blessings and Benefits to which we are entitled through C H R I S T. It is also a Memorial of our

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Sect. I. for the *Holy Sacrament.* §3

Deliverance from the Power of Sin, and is the Means by which we become Partakers of the Spirit of God ; and we cannot perform it suitably to these Ends, unless we bring with us not only a Willingness, but a Desire to be delivered from the Power of our Sins, and earnest Longing for the Assistance of GOD's Grace to subdue them, with firm Resolutions to improve it to that End. In this Holy Ordinance, we behold the *Purchase* which *Christ* made of us, with the Price of his own Blood ; and therefore, we cannot partake of it aright, without a just Sense of our Obligations to *serve* and *obey* him as our Lord and Master, and the Resigning ourselves to his holy Will. With Regard to GOD, it is the setting before us the Covenant of Mercy and Pardon, to which he is pleased to admit Mankind, on Condition of their Repentance and Amendment ; and from hence arises the indispensable Necessity of repenting of our past Sins, and entering into Resolutions of Obedience for the Future, as oft as we come to renew this Covenant in the *Sacrament*.

84 *Particular Preparations* Part II.
crament of CHRIST's Body and Blood. With Regard to our Fellow-Christians, it is a Communion which we hold with them as Brethren, and Members of the same Body under CHRIST our Head ; from whence it follows, that Forgiveness, and Love, and Unity, must be necessary Dispositions for the due Preparations of this Holy Ordinance.

IN these Particulars thus briefly summed up and set before us in one View, we see clearly, when it is that we rightly *discern the Lord's Body*, or, in other Words, have a right Judgment, as well concerning the Nature and Design of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as of the Dispositions and Preparations of Soul that are necessary to make us worthy Partakers, being such as have a plain and necessary Connexion with the *Nature* and *Design* of the Institution.

AND because it will not avail us to have a right Knowledge of the Institution, unless we bring with us Dispositions and Resolutions suitable thereunto ; it is required of us by St. Paul, that, together

with

with the *Discerning of the Lord's Body*, we also *Examine* and *Judge* ourselves, to see whether we find in our *Hearts* these *Thoughts* and *Impressions*, which the discerning of it aright doth naturally raise and create in us ; and if we do not find them, that we *Judge* and condemn ourselves, and enter into a Course of *Resolutions*, and *Mediations* suitable to this *Holy Constitution* ; that so we may become worthy *Partakers* of the *Lord's Body*.

What I have said, seems to be the true Sense of St. *Paul's* Exhortation and Reproof of the Christians at *Corinth*, interpreted in a due Extent, and according to the plain *Ground* and *Reason* of them. And while some have restrained them to that single *Disorder* of eating and drinking to *Excess* at their *Love Feasts*, and the shutting out the *Poor* from them ; and others have extended them so far, as to make a solemn Course of *Examination* absolutely necessary to our becoming worthy *Partakers* of the *Lord's Table* ; both these Interpretations have carried Men into undue Extremes, which however innocently meant,

meant, have been attended with unhappy Consequences to Religion.

BUT although such a solemn Course of Examination is not *absolutely necessary* in this Case; yet since we come to the Lord's Table to commemorate our Redemption from the Guilt and Power of Sin, and to enliven our Faith and Trust in CHRIST for the Pardon of them, (which Pardon we cannot obtain without Confession and Repentance) since also we come to renew our Covenant with God, which implies a Sorrow for our past Breaches of it, and Resolutions of future Obedience, more especially in those Instances in which we have hitherto transgressed (neither of which can be done without a due Enquiry into our past Lives :) Since, lastly, the Generality of Christians, by giving up their Thoughts to the Cares or Diversions of the World, are too great Strangers to their spiritual State, and enter too seldom into the Accounts between God and themselves, for which the Time of Receiving the Holy Communion, and preparing for it, is (as we have shewn) a most proper Season:

Season: Upon all these Considerations, I shall here subjoin some useful Helps for Examining our Lives, and confessing our Sins, and forming our Resolutions of Obedience for the Time to come.

AND because (as *Solomon* speaks, *Prov.* xvi. 1.) *The Preparation of the Heart in Man is from the Lord*; let us begin our Preparation for this Holy Performance with Prayer to God, in this, or the like Manner.



A Prayer, that God would Prepare the Heart for the due Receiving of the Holy Sacrament, and assist us in the Examination of our Lives.

MOST Gracious and Merciful God, who workest in me both to will and to do, of thy good Pleasure; I bless thy

holy

holy Name for the sincere Desire thou haſt put into my Heart, of coming to thy holy Table, and the Opportunities which thou art pleased to vouchſafe me of my renewing my Covenant with Thee. In an humble Sense of my own Weakness and Insufficiency to do any Thing that is good of myself, I implore the Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, in my honest Endeavours to become a worthy Partaker of the Body and Blood of Christ. Raise my Mind from the Cares and Businesſ of this World, to a ſerious Consideration of Heavenly Things; and be pleased to stir up in me Pious Thoughts and Devout Affections; that the Meditations of my Heart being ſuch as become this

this Heavenly Feast may be Well-pleasing and Acceptable in thy Sight. Possess me with such a Sense of the glorious Majesty before whom I am to appear, and of the great Concern of my Soul in the Work I am going about, as may prepare me to approach thy Table with Reverence and Circumspection. Help me, I beseech thee, so to lay to Heart the Sufferings of my Saviour, and thy tender Love in the Redemption of Mankind, that I may steadfastly resolve from henceforth to serve and obey Thee, and to continue His for ever, who hath Redeemed and bought me with the Price of his own Blood. And finally, do Thou, who triest the Hearts and Reins, and knowest the

90 *Particular Preparations* Part II.
my Down-sitting and my Up-
rising, graciously assist and di-
rect me in the Examination of
my Life. Try me, O God, and
seek the Ground of my Heart;
Prove me and examine my
Thoughts, and bring to my Re-
membrance all my most hidden
and secret Sins: That having set
my Transgressions in order be-
fore me, and humbled my Soul
under a due Sense of my Vile-
ness, I may be capable of Re-
ceiving the gracious Seal of thy
Pardon and Favour, in the Blood
of thy Son and my alone Saviour
Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

HA V I N G prayed to God for his
Holy Spirit, to breed in us such a
pious Disposition of Soul as is suitable to
the Work we are going about, and to as-
sist and direct us in the Examination of our
Lives;

Lives : The next Thing to be done is the Examination itself.

AND so many and various are the Sins of our Lives (in Thought, Word, and Deed ; against GOD, our Neighbour and ourselves) that this Work will at best be confused and imperfect, except Christians have a certain Method in which to proceed, and proper Helps to bring their several Sins distinctly to Remembrance. And without doubt, the Help most proper and effectual in this Case, is to lay before Men the several Heads of their Duty to GOD, their Neighbour, and themselves ; that upon each particular Head, they may examine their past Lives, and try the present Bent and Disposition of their Hearts. Which will be done with greater Certainty and Benefit, if they observe the following Rules, as proceed in it.

1. WHEREEVER they find themselves Innocent, let them in their Hearts give God the Glory, and beg of him to preserve and continue them so.

Rules to be observed in the Examination of our Lives.

Rules of Examination.

2. WHEN

2. WHEN they come to any Christian Grace or Virtue, which, though they have not wholly neglected, they desire particularly to increase in ; let them lift up their Hearts to God, for his Holy Spirit to aid and assist their sincere Endeavours to grow in it ; remembering, that the Duty of a good Christian, is not barely the avoiding of Sin, but also the Growing in Grace and Goodness, and in greater Degrees of Delight and Stedfastness in the several Duties of Religion.

3. IN the Course of this Enquiry into their Sins, they must take into the Account such *aggravating* Circumstances as increase and heighten the Guilt of them. When they come to any Sin that they have committed often, or deliberately, or against the Checks of Conscience, or against frequent Admonitions, or lastly, against their own special Vows and Resolutions to the contrary : All such Circumstances (implying greater Degrees of Depravity, and an Obstinacy in sinning;) must be brought into the Account together with the Sin ; to increase their Shame and Sorrow, and to shew them how greatly they stand in need

need of God's Pardon for what is past, and of his Assisting Grace to preserve and strengthen them for the Time to come.

4. WHERE they find themselves Guilty upon any Head, whether of Omitting a Duty, or Committing a Sin ; let them carefully remember it, either by a short Hint in Writing, or by some Mark in the Margin in their Book : That having gone thro' all the Heads of Examination, they may be able to make a distinct *Confession* of their several Sins before God, and separately enter their Vows and Resolutions against each. This is very necessary, not only in order to *Confession*, and to make our Resolutions against Sin more distinct and particular, but also to remain as a Witness of our having made such Vows and Resolutions, and a Warning, when we come to examine ourselves again, to consider in a more especial Manner how well we have remembered and made good what we so solemnly promised in the Presence of God.

5. If in the Course of this Examination, any Person shall have Doubts upon his Mind concerning the Lawfulness or Unlaw-

lawfulness of this or that Action, or shall meet with Scruples and Difficulties of any other Kind; let him first pray to GOD, to enlighten and establish his Mind, and then have Recourse to the Minister whom the Providence of God hath appointed for his spiritual Guide.

6. AND lastly, that the Work may be performed aright, let them remember, that it is a Work between GOD and their own Consciences, and that it is in vain to hope to hide any Thought, Action, or Design, from his All-seeing Eye; and as a Consequence of these, let them, at the Beginning adjure their Hearts to be honest and impartial, as they will answer it before the great Searcher and Judge of them at the last Day.

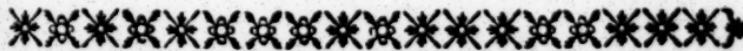




H E A D S

O F

EXAMINATION



Duty to G O D.



*O I believe and consider, that
GOD, by his PROVIDENCE,
governs the World, and all
Things in it ?*

*Do I remember, that GOD beholds
the most secret Thoughts and Actions of
my Heart and Life ?*

Am

96 Particular Preparations Part II. See

Am I warned by the Sense of God's All-
seeing Providence, to take Heed to
my Ways?

Do I ascribe the Success of my Under-
takings, chiefly to the good Providence
of God over me?

Do I pray daily for the Protection of
God, and his Blessings upon my honest
Endeavours?

Hath the GOODNESS and MERCY of
GOD, in Creating, Preserving, and
Redeeming me, that Effect upon my
Heart, as to make me LOVE him, and
desire to please him?

Do I LOVE God for his own Excellen-
cies?

Have the many Testimonies which I have
received of God's Mercy and Good-
ness, bred in me a comfortable HOPE
in him?

Have I never so far presumed upon his
Mercy, as to encourage me to sin a-
gainst him?

Am

Am I duly thankful to God for his Mercies and Benefits?

Hath the Consideration of God's MAJESTY and GREATNESS imprinted upon my Heart Awful and Reverend Thoughts concerning him?

Hath it bred in me modest and humble Thoughts concerning myself?

Have I such a Sense of the POWER and JUSTICE of God, as makes me afraid to provoke him?

Doth the Consideration of God's POWER and JUSTICE, make me afraid of offending him more than Men?

Do I stedfastly rely upon the TRUTH and PROMISE of God, under all Distresses and Calamities?

Have I never tried to deliver myself out of Calamity by sinful Means?

Have I patiently waited for a Deliverance in God's good Time?

Do I resign myself to the WISDOM of God, to chuse for me such a Condition as he shall see most convenient ?

Have I patiently submitted to his Will, under all Condition whatsoever ?

Am I not immoderately careful and anxious about outward Things ?

Have I not been eager in my Desires, and impatient under Disappointments ?

Have I not murmured and repined at the Dispensations of GOD ?

Have I turned my Thoughts upon GOD, and surrendered myself to him, as oft as any Crosses or Calamities have come upon me ?

Have the Crosses and Disappointments of this World made me more serious and careful about the Things of the next Life ?

Have I shew'd due Honour to the Name of GOD, by abstaining from all Profaneness,

*faneness, Perjury, Curfing, and vain
Swearing ?*

*Am I not guilty of using the Sacred
Names of GOD, or his Son JESUS
CHRIST, lightly, and in my ordinary
Conversation ?*

*Do I take Care to admonish and reprove
others for these Sins, so far as I may
with Prudence and Decency ?*

*Do I reverence the WORD of GOD, as
contained in the Holy Scriptures ?*

*Do I read and observe it, in order to
make it the Rule of Life ?*

*Do I consider the LORD's-DAY, as set
apart by GOD for the Care of my
Soul, and the Preparation of my self
for the next Life ?*

*Do I employ the LORD's-DAY in Read-
ing, Praying, and such other Godly
Exercises ?*

*Do I repair to Church for the WOR-
SHIP of GOD, as oft as I may, by
E 2 reason*

reason of Sickness or other unavoidable Hindrances ?

Do I go to Church with a hearty Intention to serve GOD, and to be instructed in my Duty, or reminded of it ; and not only for Fashion's Sake ?

Do I shew my Zeal and Sincerity in repairing to the Church, by endeavouring to be always present at the Beginning of Divine Service ?

Do I behave myself in the Church reverently, as in the House of God ?

Do I devoutly lift up my Heart to GOD in the Prayers and Praises of the Church, and avoid as much as in me lies, all Wandering of Eyes and Thoughts ?

Do I attentively hearken to the Word read and preached to me by his Ministers ?

Do I afterwards reflect upon what I have heard, and lay it up in my Heart, in order to live according to it ?

Have

Sect. I. for the Holy Sacrament. 101

Have I a reverend Regard to the SACRAMENTS which GOD hath appointed in his Church?

Have I been mindful of my Part of the Covenant which I made with GOD by my Sureties in Baptism, and which I took upon myself at my Confirmation?

Do I take Care and endeavour, as I promised, that all Persons, whose Sureties I have been in Baptism, live Godly and Religiously?

Have I not neglected to seek for God's Pardon and Grace, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

Have I not come to the holy Sacrament rashly, and without due Preparation?

Duty to our NEIGHBOUR.

Do I sincerely WISH and DESIRE the Spiritual and Temporal WELFARE of all Men?

Am I heartily disposed, as Occasion shall serve, to promote the Welfare of their Souls, Bodies, and Estates?

Do I consider my Neighbours as my Brethren and Fellow-Members of the Body of Christ?

Have I never been the Means of hurting the SOUL of my Neighbour, in drawing him to Sin by my Authority, or Allurements, or Example?

Do I endeavour to restrain my Neighbour, when I see him running into Sin, by seasonable Cautions and friendly Admonitions?

Have I never injured the BODY of my Neighbour, by murdering, maiming, or hurting it?

Have I never been the Means and Occasion of doing any of these?

Do I lay timely Restraints upon my Rage and Revenge, and whatever else

else I find a Temptation to Violence
against the Body of my Neighbour?

Have I never been guilty of fighting or
attempting Duels?

Do I carefully avoid the Engaging of
others in Quarrels and Contention?

Have I not enticed or corrupted my
Neighbour's WIFE, or his DAUGH-
TER, or any others belonging to him,
and under his Care?

Do I covet the GOODS or ESTATE of
my Neighbour?

Do I envy my Neighbour the Enjoyment
of any Things with which GOD hath
blessed him?

Do I suppress the first Motion of such ir-
regular Thoughts and Desires?

Have I never spoiled or abused my Neigh-
bour's Goods out of Malice to him.

Have I never through Covetousness, de-
frauded or over-reached my Neighbour?

Have I not oppressed my Neighbour, by my Power and Authority, or by Extortion and griping Usury ?

Do I make Conscience of repaying what I have borrowed of my Neighbour ?

Do I honestly endeavour to make good to him whatever I have promised ?

Do I make Conscience of speaking according to Truth ?

Have I never deceived my Neighbour by Lying, Dissembling, or Double-Dealing ?

Have I not openly by Force, or secretly by Theft, taken away the Goods of my Neighbour ?

Have I never betrayed my Neighbour in any Matter committed to my Trust and Management ?

Have I not endeavoured to impose upon my Neighbour in Matters of Trade and Traffick, by concealing the Faults of my own Goods ?

Have I not taken the Advantage of his Ignorance, or his Necessities, to demand

demand an immoderate Price for my own Goods, or to allow him too small a Consideration for his?

Am I ready to make Restitution, according to my Power, for the Wrong and Injustice I have at any Time done my Neighbour?

Do I believe that honest and upright Dealing, with the Blessing of God, is the Way to be happy, both in this World and the next?

Have I had due Tenderness for the Good Name and Reputation of my Neighbour?

Have I never spread evil Reports concerning him, which I knew to be false?

Have not I spread Reports to his Disadvantage, upon weak and slight Grounds?

Have I not a Delight in laying open the Failings of my Neighbour?

Have I never borne false Witness against any Man in a Court of Justice?

106 Particular Preparations Part. II.

Do I not give myself the Liberty openly to Reproach, Revile, and Rail against my Neighbour, in my ordinary Conversation?

Have I not secretly slandered my Neighbour, by Whispering and Backbiting?

Do I not encourage Backbiters, by listening to them, or giving too easy Credit to their Slanders?

Have I been ready to do Right to my Neighbour, when I have heard him injured in his good Name?

Have I not scoffed at or vilified my Neighbour, for Deformity of Body, or Weakness of Mind?

Am I mild and gentle in my Carriage towards my INFERIORS?

Am I courteous, affable, and obliging in my Behaviour towards my EQUALS?

Do I pay due Honour and Reverence to my SUPERIORS in Church and State?

Do I obey them in all lawful Commands, for Conscience-sake, or having their Authority from God?

Sect. I. for the Holy Sacrament. 107

*Do I pay due Respect to all my Superiors
in Age and Quality, and in Abilities
and Endowments ?*

*Do I regard my SPIRITUAL PASTOR,
as an Ambassador and Messenger from
God, and set over me by his Appoint-
ment ?*

*Do I hearken to his Instructions and Ad-
monitions, as watching for the Good
of my Soul ?*

*Do I esteem and respect him (as the
Scripture commands me) for his Work-
sake, and his Endeavours for the Sal-
vation of my Soul ?*

*Do I shew due Thankfulness and Grati-
tude to all my Benefactors ?*

*Am I compassionate towards my POOR
Neighbours, and all who are in any
Affliction or Calamity ?*

*Do I pray to GOD to assist, comfort and
relieve them ?*

Am

108 Particular Preparations Part II.

Am I ready to contribute to their Relief, freely and chearfully, according as GOD hath enabled me ?

Am I ready, after the Example of my Blessed Saviour, to do Good to, and to pray for my ENEMIES ?

Do I not seek or desire Opportunities of Revenge ?

Do I enforce upon my Mind the Christian Doctrine of forgiving Enemies, as oft as I meet with any Provocation to Revenge or Resentmens ?

Do I take all proper Ways of being reconciled to those who are at Enmity with me ?

Do I endeavour to make Peace, wherever I see others at Enmity among themselves ?

Duty to OUR-SELVES.

Do I consider myself as created by GOD, to be eternally happy or miserable after this Life ?

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I. Sect. I. for the **Holy Sacrament.** 109

Have I duly considered the Terms and Conditions, upon which GOD hath promised to make me everlastingly happy ?

Do I account the Preparation of my self for **Heaven**, the most important Work I have to do in this **World** ?

Am I not more concerned about my **Body** or **Estate**, than about the Welfare of my **Soul** ?

Do I so consider the **Frailty** and **Uncertainty** of **Life**, as to be always prepared for my latter **End** ?

Do I remember, that after this **Life**, I am to give an **Account** of all my **Actions** ?

Do I endeavour to adorn my **Soul** with the **Christian Graces** and **Virtues**, in **Imitation** of **Jesus Christ** ?

Do I study after a true **HUMILITY** of **Soul**, and to make my self sensible of my own **Follies** and **Fraughties** ?

Do.

110 Particular Preparations Part II.

Do I resist the first Risings of Pride and an immoderate Opinion of my own Endowments?

Do I thankfully ascribe to GOD whatever Endowments I have, whether outward or inward?

Do I study to improve them all to God's Glory, and the Good of Mankind?

Am I not vain-glorious, and apt to be puffed up with the Praise of Men?

Hath the Praise of Men, or Fear of their Censures, never made me transgress my Duty to God?

Am I moved to do Good, chiefly out of Conscience towards God, and not for the Praise of Men?

Do I endeavour after a MEEK and quiet Spirit?

Do I shew it in the daily Course of a calm, quiet, and obliging Conversation?

Do I carefully restrain myself from Rage, Passion, and Peevishness?

Sect. I. for the Holy Sacrament. 111

*Am I CONTENTED with the Condition
which GOD hath allotted me in this
World?*

*Do I not secretly murmur at the Mean-
ness of my own Condition, compared
with the Riches and Honours of other
Men?*

*Am I not covetous, and immoderately de-
sirous of these earthly Things?*

*Do I not envy others, whose Condition is
more plentiful and prosperous than my
own?*

*Am I DILIGENT in the Calling and
Profession which the Providence of
God hath appointed me?*

*Do I remember that I must give an Ac-
count to God of the Time he vouch-
safes me in this World?*

*Do I take Care to employ my Time in-
nocently, and as beneficially as I may
to myself and others?*

Do

112. Particular Preparations Part II.

Do I endeavour to preserve both my Soul and Body in Chastity and Purity ?

Have I never been guilty of Adultery, Fornication, or any other actual Pollution and Uncleanness ?

Do I carefully avoid all such Objects and Discourses, as are apt to excite filthy Desires in my Heart ?

Do I not feed and heighten my Lust, by pampering my Body ?

Do I fast and pray, as I find Occasion for the subduing and mortifying of my Lusts ?

Do I preserve my Body in Temperance of all Kinds ?

Do I carefully abstain from immoderate Eating and Drinking ?

Am I not over-curious and expensive in my Meat and Drink ?

Do I shun all Occasions of immoderate Drinking ? and when I foresee such Temp-

Temptation, Do I resolve and pray to God against them ?

Do I not spend my Time in SLEEPING immoderately, beyond what is necessary or convenient for Refreshment ?

Am I moderate in my RECREATIONS, making them only Preparatives to the ordinary Business of my Life ?

Do I chuse and desire such RECREATIONS only as are honest and innocent ?

Am I not apt to set my Heart upon them, or to be too vehement about them ?

Do I use Moderation in my APPAREL, suitable to my Condition and Abilities ?

¶, Thus far, all Persons, of what Age, Sex, or Condition soever, are concerned to Examine themselves distinctly upon every Head. But Enquiry

quiry is only to be made upon the following Heads, as they agree to the particular Circumstances and Relations of every Person.

Duty of CHILDREN to PARENTS.

Do I honour and reverence my Parents, according to the Commandment of God?

Do I obey my Parents, not only out of Fear, but for Conscience-sake, in all their lawful Commands?

Do I shew all Love and Gratitude to them for my Being and Education?

Do I not secretly wish the Death of my Parents, out of Impatience to be delivered from their Government, or possessed of their Estate?

Do I heartily wish and pray for their Life and Prosperity?

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1. Sect. I. for the Holy Sacrament. 115

Am I ready to assist them in all their Wants and Necessities, according to my Ability?

Do I dutifully conceal and excuse their Failings and Infirmities?

Duty of PARENTS to CHILDREN.

Am I diligent in my Calling, to enable my self to nourish and sustain my Children?

Do I take due Care to instruct them betimes in their Duty, and to bring them up from their Infancy in the Fear of God?

Do I watch over their Behaviour, and see that they practise what they have been taught?

Do I correct or encourage them, without Fondness or Partiality, as their Behaviour requires or deserves?

Do

116 Particular Preparations Part II.

Do I keep them to their Duty, by setting them an Example of sober and regular Living ?

Do I endeavour to provide for them a competent Subsistence in the World according to their Condition ?

Do I bless them, and commend them to the Favour and Guidance of God ?

Duty to B R E T H R E N.

Do I heartily love my Brethren and Sisters, as Part of myself ?

Do I not secretly wish their Death or Disgrace, to make my own Fortune the more plentiful ?

Do I always strive to keep up brotherly Love and Unity in the Family ?

Duty of the W I F E to her H U S B A N D.

Am I content to live in due Subjection and

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II. Sect. I. for the Holy Sacrament. 117

and Obedience to my Husband, according to the Will of God ?

Am I true and faithful to him in his Bed and his Estate ?

Am I loving to him, and desirous to render his Life as easy and comfortable as I can ?

Duty of the HUSBAND to his WIFE.

Do I love my Wife, and shew it in a kind, tender, and gentle Behaviour towards her ?

Am I faithful to her Bed ?

Am I careful to provide for her whatever is needful and convenient, according to my Power and Ability ?

Duty of a SERVANT to his MASTER

Do I obey my Master in all lawful Commands cheerfully, and in Obedience to

to God, whose Providence bath set him over me ?

Am I faithful to him in all his Business and Concerns ?

Do I not take the Advantage of his Absence, to be Idle and Unjust to him ?

Do I meekly and patiently submit to his Correction, without answering again ?

Duty of a M A S T E R to his S E R V A N T.

Am I just to my Servant, in performing the Conditions upon which he gave himself up to my Service ?

Do I freely allow him the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life ?

Do I take Care of his Soul, by instructing him in his Duty, and giving him proper Opportunities to serve God ?

Do I admonish and correct him with Calmness and Gravity, when he transgresses his Duty ?

Do

Do I set him an Example of Sobriety and Godliness, in my own Life and Conversation?

Am I reasonable and moderate in the Commands which I lay upon him?

Do I encourage his living Soberly and Religiously, by proper Marks of my Kindness and Favour?

I OBSERVED before, that this Examination of our Lives, is in order to the Confession of our Sins, and that such a distinct Sight and Consideration of them may breed in us humble and contrite Hearts. When therefore we are come to a sufficient Knowledge of our Sins, by the foregoing Method of Examination, the next Step is, to REPENT of them; and the first Part of our Repentance is, to make an humble Confession of our Vileness and Unworthiness in committing them, after this or the like Manner.

Confession and
Humiliation.

*A Confession of Sins to God, and
Humiliation for them.*

O Most Holy Lord God, who beholdest all my Ways, and understandest the most secret Imaginations of my Heart ; I humble myself before Thee, with Shame and Confusion of Face, for the manifold Sins and Transgressions of my Life. I was shapen and conceived in Iniquity ; and while I forgot thy Laws, and neglected to seek to Thee for the Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, the Corruptions of my Heart have increased more and more, and drawn me into many great and shameful Transgressions of my Duty.

Duty *. These my Transgressions, O Lord, which I now Confess before Thee, and many more that I cannot remember and Reckon up, have made me less than the least of thy Mercies, and utterly unworthy of thy Grace and Favour. But I beseech Thee, let the same infinite Goodness, which amidst all my Provocations hath spared me thus long, prevail with Thee to accept this Confession and Humiliation of a Penitent Sinner. Give me a deep Sense of the Evil of Sin ; and of my own Vilenes and Wretchedness in offending so gracious a God, against the clearest Knowledge

* Here make a Particular Confession of the Sins which upon Examination you have found yourself guilty of.

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122 *Particular Preparations* Part II.
of thy Will, the Checks of my
own Conscience, and the high-
est Obligations of Duty and In-
terest. And may the Remem-
brance of all this Folly, Per-
verseness and Ingratitude, work
in me a hearty Indignation a-
gainst myself, and fill my Soul
with Shame, and Sorrow, and
Confusion : That when I come
to thy Holy Table, I may offer
unto Thee the Sacrifice of an
humble and contrite Heart,
which is always acceptable in
thy Sight, through the Merits
and Mediation of thy Son Jesus
Christ, my only Saviour and
Redeemer. *Amen.*

H A V-

HAVING thus Examined our Lives, and Confessed our Sins before God, and humbled ourselves under the Sense of our manifold Transgressions of his Laws; our next Work is, to turn our Thoughts upon the only Means by which we can be Redeemed from our Sins, and Reconciled to God: And this is through the Blood of Jesus Christ; *in whom we have Redemption, even the Forgiveness of our Sins* (Col. i. 14.) Whom God hath set forth to be the Propitiation for our Sins (Rom. iii. 25.) Who is the Mediator between God and Man, even the Man Jesus Christ, who gave a Ransom for all (1 Timothy ii. 6.) Who, when we have sinned, is our Advocate with the Father (1 John ii. 1.) By whose Death alone we can be reconciled to God (Rom. v. 10.) and who is ready to make our Peace with the Father, through the Blood of his Cross (Col. i. 20.)

AND it is a further comfort to us, under the Sense and Burden of our Sins, to consider, not only that we have a Saviour

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and Redeemer, but that he hath given humble and penitent Sinners, such gracious Invitations and Encouragements to come to him for Pardon and Salvation. *Come unto me* (saith he, *Matth. xi. 28.*) *all ye that labour, and are heavy laden* with the Burden of your Sins, *and I will give you Rest.* And again, (*John vi. 37.*) *He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* And he declares (*Luke v. 32.*) that *He came into the World, on Purpose to call Sinners to Repentance;* and (*Luke xix. 10.*) *to seek and to save that which was lost.*

WHICH gracious Declarations and Encouragements, together with the Sense of our own Vileness and Misery, prepare us to come to CHRIST, with a true and lively Faith; neither trusting to our own Merits, nor distrusting the Mercies of God; but casting ourselves wholly upon the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, in a stedfast Assurance that through his Blood we shall receive the Remission of our Sins; and that *being justified by Faith, we shall have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

But then we must remember that the Redemption of CHRIST consists in his delivering us, not only from the *Guilt* of our Sins past, but also from the *Power* and *Dominion* of them for the Time to come. CHRIST gave himself for us, not only that he might redeem us from all *Iniquity*, but likewise that he might purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good *Works*, (Tit. ii. 14.) And, He was manifested, not only to take away our Sins, but also by his Blood to purge our Consciences from dead *Works* to serve the Living God, (Heb. ix. 14.) No Persons then must hope for any Benefit by the Death of CHRIST, but they who will take the Redemption which he wrought for us whole and entire; that is, none must hope for the Pardon of his Sins past, but he who sincerely desires to be delivered from them for the Time to come.

AND therefore having begun the Work of Repentance in the foregoing Confession of our past Sins and the Humiliation of

Resolutions
of future Obe-
dience.

our Souls under a Sense of them; we must now continue and perfect it, by solemnly professing in the Presence of G o D, our earnest Desires to be delivered from the Power of Sin, and our Resolutions, thro' the Assistance of his Grace, *to forsake Un-godliness and worldly Lust* (Tit. ii. 11, 22.) *and to live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly*, while he shall please to continue us in this World.

WHICH Desires and Resolutions compleating and finishing our Repentance, may, in the Course of our Preparation for the Holy Sacrement, be immediately joined to the foregoing Part of it, namely, Confession and Humiliation, and be offered to Almighty God in these or the like Words:



A Solemn Promise to GOD of future Obedience, with Prayer of Grace to perform it.

FUrthermore, as a Testimony of my hearty Sorrow and Repentance for what is past, Accept, O Lord, this Profession of my earnest Desire to be delivered from my Sins for the Time to come, and my sincerest Resolutions to avoid and forsake them ; especially such as I know myself most apt to be betrayed into *. And that I may not fall from these good Purposes, thro' the Temptations of

* Here renounce the particular Sins, which you find yourself in greatest Danger to fall into, whether by Nature or Custom, or the Course of your Business and Conversation.

128 *Particular Preparations* Part. II.
the World, or the Deceitfulness,
of my own Heart ; I here so-
lemnly promise, to set thy Laws
before my Eyes, and to keep a
strict Watch over mine own
Thoughts and Ways ; to re-
member my Weakness and In-
firmity, and to pray daily for
the Assistance of thy Grace ; to
avoid, as much as in me lies, all
Occasions and Opportunities of
Sin, and by a religious Use of
thy holy Ordinances both in
Public and Private, to cherish
the good Dispositions which thou
hast raised in my Heart. With
these Desires and Resolutions of
Obedience for the future, I ap-
proach thy holy Table, in an
humble Assurances, thro' Faith
in my Crucified Saviour, to re-
ceive

ceive the comfortable Pledges of my Pardon for all that is past. Do Thou, who art a God ready to pardon, and abundant in Mercy, blot out all my known and wilful Transgressions, and cleanse me from my secret Faults. And that I may faithfully keep my Part of the Covenant for the Time to come, and continue thy obedient Servant unto my Life's End; vouchsafe me in the Partaking of these holy Mysteries, such a Portion of thy good Spirit, as Thou shalt see necessary to guide me in all my Ways, and preserve from all Temptations; and to keep up in me a true Christian Temper of Soul. That so being justified by Faith, and strengthened

with Might by thy Spirit in the inner Man, I may be restored to thy Favour, and continually live to him who died for me, thy Son, my only Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*



S E C T. II.

How we ought to behave ourselves, In the Receiving the Holy Sacrament.

IF there be Time while others are making their Offerings, the two last Prayers may be said privately; to renew your Sorrow for the Sins of your Life, and to confirm your Vows and Resolutions against them, and also to revive upon your Heart such Thoughts and Meditations as are suitable to the Nature of the Holy Sacrament, and the End and Design of your coming to it.

WHEN

WHEN you make your own Offering, fay,

ACCEPT, O Lord, this Free-will-Offering at my Hands, towards the Relief of my poor Brethren and Fellow-Members of the Body of Christ.

WHEN the Minister begins the Prayer for the *whole State of Christ's Church*, let every Communicant join with him, and proceed devoutly with the Congregation, 'till the Consecration of Bread and Wine is over.

WHEN the Minister and others are Receiving, let your Heart dwell upon the Redemption of Mankind by the Death of CHRIST, in these or the like Meditations.

O My God, I adore thy infinite Love in sending thy only Son out of thy Bosom, to recover

recover me out of a State of Sin and Death, and to raise me to the joyful Hopes of Everlasting Life. May the Remembrance of this unspeakable Goodness and Mercy, teach me always to love Thee, and to live as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord.

O Blessed JESUS, who didst take upon Thee the Form of a Servant, and was content to be Reproached and Persecuted, to be Buffeted, Mockt, and Spit upon, and to submit to a most Painful and Ignominious Death, and all this for my Sake: Fill my Soul with the most grateful Sense of thy Love towards me, that I may ever love and live to Thee, who diedst for me.

me. And pierce my Heart with a most tender Feeling of thy Agonies and Sufferings for me, that I may think nothing too much to suffer for thy Sake, nor be ever drawn to crucify Thee afresh by returning to my former Sins.

WHEN the Minister is drawing near you, and before you receive the Bread, fix your Thoughts upon JESUS CHRIST dying for the Sins of the World, and say in your Heart,

I Behold by Faith my Crucified Lord dying for me ; and as my only Saviour and Redeemer, I adore and worship him. O Lord, increase and enliven my Faith ; and grant, that thro' his Merits who died and rose again for me, I may receive the

the Remission of my Sins, and the comfortable Assistance of thy Holy Spirit.

WHEN the Minister is delivering the Bread to you, go on with him in your Heart and say,

TH E Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for me, Preserve my Body and Soul unto Everlasting Life : I take and eat this in Reverence that Christ died for me, and feed on him in my Heart by Faith and Thanksgiving.

TH E Space between your Receiving the Bread and the Wine may be usefully employed in the foregoing Meditations, which you dwelt upon while the Minister and others were Receiving. Or. if you have

have not Time for that ; when he is drawing near you, to administer the Cup, fix your Thoughts upon Jesus Christ Dying for the Sins of the World, and use the same short Ejaculations which you did immediately before your Receiving the Bread.

WHEN the Minister is delivering the Cup to you, go on with him in your Heart, and say,

THE Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for me, Preserve my Body and Soul unto Everlasting Life : I drink this in Remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for me, and I am thankful.

After the Receiving of Both, say,

Blessing, Honour, and Glory, be to God the Father, and

and to the Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne, for the inestimable Mercies and Benefits obtained for me by the All-sufficient Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross. My Transgressions, which were many, are blotted out ; and I am restored from Sin and Death, to the joyful Hopes of a blessed Immortality. What shall I render unto Thee, for saving my Soul from Destruction, and for these comfortable Pledges of thy Pardon, and Favour? Accept, O Lord, the Offering of a thankful Heart, and the sincerest Desires and Resolutions to please Thee. I have sworn, and am stedfastly purposed to keep thy Righteous Judgments ; O hold Thou up

my

Sect. III. after the *Holy Sacrament.* 137
my Goings in thy Paths, that
my Footsteps slip not ; and let
the Sense of this thy unspeak-
able Goodness oblige me per-
petually to love and obey Thee,
and to continue thy faithful
Servant unto my Life's End.

Amen.

S E C T. III.

What is to be done After the Receiving of the Holy Sacrament.

AFTER you come from the Communion Table, you may use the following Prayer in Private; either in the Church (if you have Time) or at Home, or both.

A Prayer

A Prayer for Perseverance in our good Purposes and Resolutions.

MOST Gracious and Merciful God, to whose Patience and Long-suffering I wholly owe it, that amidst my manifold Provocations I am spared and preserved to this Day; I give Thee humble Thanks for the Opportunity I have enjoyed of coming to thy holy Table, and receiving the most comfortable Pledges of Pardon and Favour. Let not thy Goodness hitherto, in giving me Space for Repentance and Remission, encourage me to go on securely in the Neglect of my Duty; but let

the

Sect. III after the *Holy Sacrament.* 139
the Remembrance of thy Mer-
cies, and of the Vows and Re-
solutions I have made in thy
Presence, be perpetual Obliga-
tions upon me to watch over
my Ways, and to do that which
is well-pleasing in thy Sight.
My Heart is corrupt, and de-
ceitful above all Things: Sanc-
tify it, I beseech Thee, by thy
Holy Spirit, and stablish it for
ever in the Paths of Truth and
Righteousness. Let not the Cares
and Pleasures of this World
draw me into a Forgetfulness of
the Things of the next; nor do
Thou ever forsake me in the
Hour of Temptation, but be al-
ways my Support and Strength
in this spiritual Warfare, where-
in I have engaged anew against
the World, the Flesh, and the
Devil.

Devil. I have solemnly Renounced my Sins, and desire above all Things to be delivered from them : Be thou graciously pleased to accept these sincere Intentions and Desires, and to consider my manifold Infirmities, and to keep me stedfast in the Resolutions I have made a-

gainst every evil

* Here, reflect particularly upon the Sins which you have hitherto been chiefly guilty of, and against which you stand in greatest Need of God's Preventing and Assisting Grace. Way *. These Sins and whatever else is contary to thy holy Laws, I will heartily endeavour from this Hour to

shun and avoid ; and I implore the constant Assistance of thy holy Spirit, to subdue my Corruptions, and restrain all inordinate Desires, to make me delight in

Sect. III. after *the Holy Sacrament.* 141
in thy Way, and to replenish my
Soul with all Christian Graces
and Virtue *. That as oft as I examine
my Life, I may find in myself a greater
Growth and Stedfastness in the Practice of Religion ; and striving daily against Sin, and going on from Grace to Grace, and from Virtue to Virtue, I may live and die in thy Favour and Obedience, and be received into thy Eternal and Glorious Kingdom, through the Merits and Mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

* Here, reflect particularly upon the *Graces* and *Virtues* in which you chiefly need to be improved and confirmed.

THE foregoing Prayer must not be used in the Church, except there be a Space sufficient for it, from the Time of your own receiving

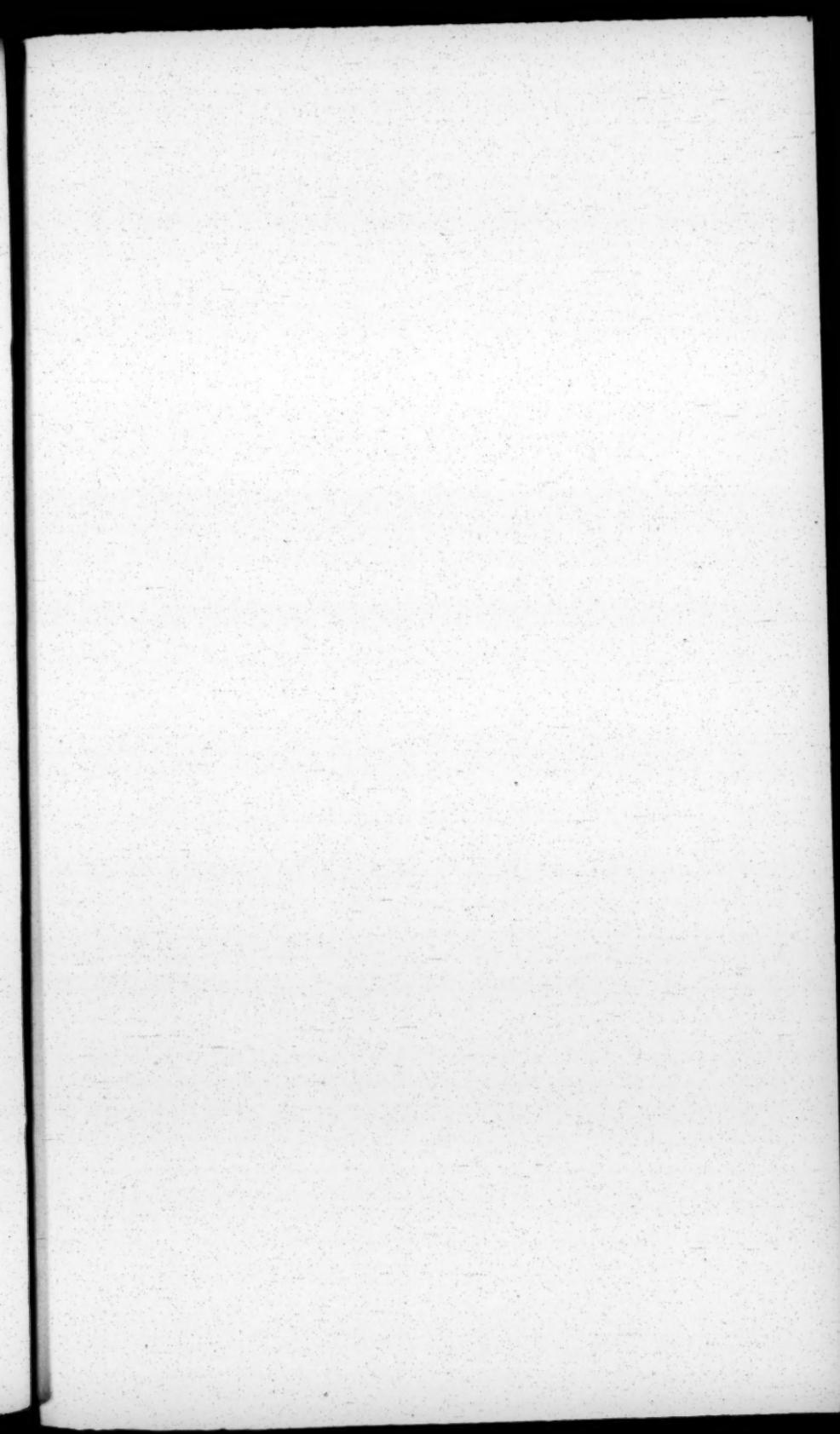
receiving the Bread and Wine, 'till they be administered to the last of those who Receive after you. For as soon as all have Received, the whole Congregation must devoutly join with the Minister in the Thanksgivings and Hymns, with which our Church concludes the Holy Communion ; in like Manner, as our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles did, at the Institution of it.

To make our good Purposes and Resolutions the more fixt and lasting ; it is convenient, that such Persons who have Received the Holy Sacrament, do employ the remaining Part of that Day in the Public Worship of GOD, and in reading good Books at Home ; and that they reflect in Private upon the solemn Promises they have made, and use the foregoing Prayer for the Grace and Assistance of GOD, that they may be able to perform them. But these are only convenient, not necessary ; nor are they required of Persons in any other Degrees, than as their Condition in the World, and their Circumstances at that parti-

particular Time will allow. In all such Cases, if Servants, and others who have not the Command of their own Time, cannot employ as much of it in these Exercises, as they wish and desire ; they may rest assured, that GOD approves and accepts their willing Mind, provided they go on in a sincere Resolution to avoid and forsake Sin, and live in the Fear of GOD, and behave themselves with Conscience and Honesty in the several Stations which his Providence hath appointed them.

F I N I S.





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